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MEMOIR

OF

REV. ALEXANDER GORDON,

PASTOR OF THE

ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

JOHNSTOWN, FULTON COUNTY, NEW YORK.

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PREFACE.

It was said by Bacon that biography, especially auto-biography, is generally more interesting and instructive than any other kind of writing, as it comes home to every man's business and bosom. That the record of God's providential dealing with his people, and of their various soul-exercises, is most eminently calculated to be useful, we may know by the fact that a large part of the sacred volume is composed of such records. An enlarged acquaintance with the vicissitudes and trials which some of God's people have been called to meet, will greatly tend to nerve us under similar trials, and prevent our fainting in the day of adversity, or feeling that some strange thing has happened unto us. How many a weary pilgrim ready to faint in his heaven-ward journey has been refreshed and cheered, in the good providence of God, by the memoirs of Boston, Halyburton, the Erskines!—How many have been stirred up to a greater

degree of self-devotement to the service of God, to a more complete denial of self, and weanedness from the world, from the life and letters of Alleine—Brainerd—Martyn, Newton, Scott, Wilberforce. Many a Christian, too, whose sphere in life is so humble and secluded as to afford few incidents of note, whose memoirs cannot perhaps awaken the zeal or admiration of the reader, yet has been blessed to confirm the feeble, and to strengthen the hands that hang down, by showing that God gives his very choicest blessings to the humble, dwelling in their hearts—and beautifying those meek ones with his salvation. Mrs. Lilias Campbell, Mrs. West, Mrs. Graham, and a lovely one, but lately gone to heaven, Mary Lundie Duncan, are examples of this class. The memory of the just is blessed—blessed to the just who live afterward. The knowledge of God's goodness to departed saints begets a trustfulness in us, that he will be true to all his promises. God will not forget his people—neither will he quit or forsake his own inheritance. This delightful feeling was beautifully exemplified in the case of the wife of Calvin on her death-bed—"O glorious Resurrection!" said she, "God of Abraham, and all our fathers! The faithful have, for so many

ages, hoped in thee, and not one has been disappointed. I will also hope."

This hope, which is incited by the knowledge that the love of God has been savingly manifested in those long since departed, is strengthened when any of our contemporaries are evidently the objects of God's electing love: we see that even in our day, upon whom the ends of the world are come, his hand is not shortened that it cannot save. He still has a seed to serve him. Even in these evil days God has reserved some who have not defiled their garments.

These considerations have induced many who were zealous for the honour of God and for the good of souls, to believe it to be their duty to record some of the most remarkable dealings of Providence towards them, and the exercises of their souls under them. Though these writings have been generally viewed with favour by the religious world from the intuitive evidence they give of fidelity, yet there are not wanting persons who view such disclosures of devotional feeling with distrust and suspicion, and who severely animadvert on the motives of persons who make such disclosures. It is not to be denied that sin, even in the children of God, defiles in some

measure every thought, word and action, and that, notwithstanding all their endeavours to the contrary, feelings of pride not wholly mortified may mingle in their motives in engaging in the most solemn duty. But those who have spiritual discernment will readily believe that the motives which induce persons to declare what God has done for their soul have been as pure as any that can actuate our race, love to God, and love to man.

A very pious man—the author of the Retrospect—in the preface to the fifteenth edition of his work, says: "With gratitude and surprise I perceive that fourteen editions of this book have gone into the world, and with sorrow I confess that nothing has been added to the original matter. His conscience smote him. Have you, during all this period recollected nothing more of the Lord's goodness and mercy? Has nothing transpired during all the years that have fled since you wound up your Retrospect worthy of being recorded to the praise of the riches of Divine grace? Under these impressions he resumed his pen and drew up nine additional chapters."

The incidents in the life of any child of God, if faithfully narrated, would doubtless tend to deepen the conviction, but too faintly impress-

ed on us all, that "they that will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall* suffer persecution." Not always the same kind, but some kind, the faithful and true shall surely suffer. God has seen it necessary to give precept upon precept in this matter. The whole book of Job was written that we might speak and think *rightly* of God, and not as Job's friends spake and thought. Notwithstanding that Solomon has said that no man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him, yet how prone are we to imagine, if any are great sufferers, they must have been great sinners! A short time since a writer in a New England paper gravely observed—that God had evidently showed he did not favour the principles and practices of Charles Torrey, for he had not interposed and opened his prison doors as he once did Peter's. "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will save him:"—said the chief priests, of Christ, when on the cross.

The writer has a lively recollection of a sermon delivered in Putnam by the late Mr. David Gordon, on the occasion of a fast shortly after the severe troubles in his brother's family, from the thirteenth of Luke—"Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners," &c. In this discourse the truth that this is not the age

or dispensation of rewards and punishments was very clearly and comfortably set forth.

Though it be true that all whom God loves he rebukes and chastens, yet are the trials through which he brings each one, as diversified as are their several countenances. A few seem to be exempted in a great measure from the opposition of the world, but are sorely tried directly by the great adversary of souls, others are more exempt from these inward conflicts, but are called to endure cruel mockings, scourgings, and even death. While our great Exemplar bore all these, together with the hidings of his Father's countenance—"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of his household."

It was the opinion of Cowper that there is a certain *style* of dispensations maintained by Providence in his dealings with every man, which, however the incidents of his life may vary, and though he may be thrown into different situations, is never exchanged for another. Those who read the following memoir will observe that the style of dispensations peculiar to Mr. Gordon was, as Cowper says, eculiar to his own case—that of sudden, vio-

lent unlooked for change. He was never wholly exempt from suffering from *the reproachful tongue.* In all those public questions in which he interested himself, particularly in his opposition to masonry, slavery and intemperance, he in common with others was subject to the imputation of unworthy motives. The opposition, however, which he received from friend or foe was a greater trial to him, than it might have been to many others; as, owing to his extreme nervous debility and bodily weakness, he seemed incapable of enduring hardship of any kind: yet he found from ample experience, he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him.

In conclusion, have we not reason to fear that the little opposition or persecution which professors of religion meet with in the present day, is owing to want of faithfulness and purity—and that the reason why so few missions of the present day meet with the persecutions or the success of apostolical missions, is because they are not distinguished by their zeal, purity and faithfulness?

MEMOIR OF REV. A. GORDON.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

THE object of the writer in presenting this biographical sketch of Mr. Gordon, is not to please the taste of the literary man, by developing the character of one devoted to intellectual pursuits—nor is it to delineate an uncommonly lovely specimen of humanity—No, but to show the riches of Divine grace in one who felt his own infirmities; and who delighted to feel and designate himself "*a sinner saved by grace.*" It is known to the friends of Mr. Gordon that his life was a remarkably checkered and eventful one. Often was he brought through deep waters where to human eye there was no standing. Sometimes the breaking waves of God's billows seemed to break over him. He had fiery trials. Yet for many years he doubted not he would at last be brought to the "wealthy place." It cannot but be instructive to the children of God to be made in some measure acquainted with the exercises of the soul of one whom his heavenly Father saw fit to chasten with sore and afflictive trials, and yet to uphold mightily with his arm.

In preparing this Memoir, copious extracts will be taken from Mr. Gordon's diary, in which he seems faithfully to have recorded some of the most remarkable incidents in his life since the age of seventeen. It is believed there can be no impropriety in making at least part of this public, as one design of its being written was to show what God had done for his soul.

Mr. Gordon was born in Montrose, Scotland, in the year 1789. He says: "My parents and grandparents on both sides were poor. My mother, Helen Hampton, was of a weakly constitution. My father was lame—from which, at times, he suffered great pain, and was frequently unfit for labour. His earnings, which would not exceed, but often fell below fifteen shillings sterling per week, were all the means of our support, and there were eleven of us, of whom seven died in childhood . . . . . Being the oldest who lived, as soon as I was capable of giving any assistance it was both needed and required. At the age of four years, I began to follow my father to his employment, which was that of a *thread miller*, at which I continued to labour, as I could, for eight years. My earnings, till my twentieth year, went wholly to my father; consequently I had not the means of a common education in my youth.

"But my parents and grandparents were, I trust, religious, and continued constant in the duties of their scriptural profession, which was

that of the Secession church, and of the anti-Burgher side. And I was carefully instructed according to it. Being immediately under my parents till I was thirteen years of age, my words and actions and company were strictly watched, which I then thought was a severe restriction. I do not recollect how early I was taught to use the Lord's prayer. At the age of seven I could use the form of asking a blessing and returning thanks at meals for myself and brothers. No deficiency in dress, and scarcely any extremity in the weather, exempted me from attending on the public ordinances of religion. At family worship I was required to repeat some part of the chapter read. On the Sabbath evening I was required to rehearse what I could of the public discourse.

"On these occasions my father sometimes took a review of my conduct through the week, and set my faults so forcibly before me, especially my aversion to spiritual things, as to make me weep bitterly. It is impossible to tell what I gained from hearing my father in conversation with other people, although I seemed at the time to be giving no attention. I mention these facts for the following reasons: First, to pay a tribute of deserved respect to the memory of my parents. Secondly, to express my approbation of their way of educating their children in the knowledge of religion, which, though common then, is now fallen into disuse. And, Thirdly, to give a tes-

timony to the goodness of God towards me. He might have given me parents rich, but ungodly, and what would I then have been? By their diligence I had acquired the form, and some knowledge of the ways of godliness, by the time I had to leave my father's employ, and go out into the world, which, although I was ignorant of its power, aided natural conscience in restraining me from sin. I thought my lot during this time was hard compared with that of others. I had no money to buy the fashionable play-tools—my attempts to make them often failed—my neighbours often laughed at my mortification. I had no time to use them if I had them; and, to crown all, the finger of scorn was pointed at me, because I belonged to the Secession church. Small matters in themselves, but they were as heavy to me at the time as the loss of a vessel at sea, or sudden bankruptcy are to those who have arrived at manhood. And they were made use of by the Holy Spirit of God, to convince me even then (not thirteen years of age) of the vanity and vexation which attend upon all human things together, and with so much clearness and force that it never afterwards entirely left my mind.

(1802.) "But the time had now arrived, (being thirteen complete) when, the thread-work failing, I must leave my father. A baker was found willing to employ and give me three shillings sterling per week in bread, which saved my feeble mother the labour of baking.

"Here I had temptations and examples of iniquity in abundance, which I was inclined to follow to some extent. But I underwent the drudgery of a slave from six o'clock in the morning, till ten and eleven in the evening, which disgusted me, both at my companions and business, and so the usage and hard treatment which made my life bitter, was mercifully ordered as a means to hold me back from falling in love with a number of sins.

"After continuing fourteen months at this, I left it and was bound apprentice to the cotton-weaving business. Here times were better, and companions more discreet, but by so much my temptations to imitate their *decent vices* became the stronger. After some time I was removed from a large shop, and placed under the care of a man who wrought alone. He was considered sober, was a professor of religion, and my parents had no apprehension of any evil. But, after all, this quiet situation seemed on review to be the snare of the devil. This man was quietly a filthy obscene man, and his sly tongue was a moral contagion. But before my time was up, the agreement was mutually dissolved, and I was once more under my father. By this event I was probably saved from ruin.

"It was not long after this, till a tempting offer was made to my father from another bake-house—managed by a widow of good repute. Her foreman was a member of our church. There were two other boys besides

me, one of whom was qualified to lead in all mischief, and unhappily I was fondest of him, and we were together night and day.

"We made some bold advances in sin, making free with the Sabbath to stay away from church, and to spend it in amusement. We obtained some pieces of bad money, and after washing them with quicksilver, passed them. The other boy and I were by him, at one time, enticed to steal some of the bread. It was here also, that for the first and only time in my life I swore. I swore *by the Devil*, thinking to be like the rest. But I had no sooner used the word than conscience smote me, and said, what? you swear? They know no better, but you!

"But this son of mischief was dismissed, and our intimacy broken off. Shortly afterwards meeting me, he abused me very much. We parted and never again met. At this moment conscience again spoke and said, 'I deserved all his ill usage, for I had forsaken my father's advice to follow this wretch, and God had stirred him up to punish me.'

"I now slept alone and had many reflections. About this time I had an alarming view of my sins. I saw them to be much more aggravated in me than in others who had not such instructions, and I felt assured that hell must be the end of my present course. I thought of *reformation*, but not of pardon through the blood of Christ. I at once firmly resolved to leave off all my sins, and do every

duty. I would speak no more vain words, would pray evening and morning, read the Bible, and keep the Sabbath. I was greatly pleased with this resolve, and with myself for making it. But, alas! it was but a very short time till I was plunged deeper in the ditch than ever. The same remedy was often repeated and with no better success. It now came into my mind, probably from Satan, that I was doing nothing in these resolutions and prayers but acting the hypocrite.—It was of no use to try any more what was impossible, and I might as well give it over, and follow my inclinations like other boys. But I durst not venture on this, for I was well convinced that it must end in destruction. My employment required my attention on the Sabbath evening: this was not right, and I was willing now to blame my employment with all my miscarriages, and, therefore, I could not expect peace, so long as I was at it, and as soon as I could find some other thing to do, I resolved to leave it. This was another legal method to appease God and pacify my conscience.

"There was at this time great encouragement to the manufacturing of sail-cloth for government commissions, as the war between Britain and France was prosecuted with vigour. I went to it, and found the labour severe, but the wages good. There were sixteen of us in the same shop, and some of them wicked enough, but every one concerned himself with his own business only. The prospect of ma-

king the world will keep even the wicked still, for a time.

"I was here only a short time till the foreman made choice of me for an assistant in the ware-room. The wages were not great, (seven shillings per week) but they were sure. My situation was now perhaps more perilous than ever. This foreman was a Deist of the grossest sort. There were in Montrose, my native town, a great many of them about this time. Some of them went the awful length of burning the Bible, and gave vent to the most horrible blasphemy. The hand of God was, I think, visible in the death of a great many of them. Some dying in the most extreme torments of soul, uttering awful curses, and expressing their certain convictions of going to the Devil. One died suddenly, his bowels passing from him. Another, while reading Burns' poems on a Sabbath, and laughing heartily at his profanity, vomited a few mouthfuls of blood and expired. Another of them dropt dead on the side-walk—and about two years after another dropped down dead in the same place.

"This man whom I assisted was what has been termed a mortal deist. [Materialist.] His creed was—The world had no beginning and will have no end—There is neither a heaven nor a hell, nor angel nor devil—When man dies, he is done—The Sabbath—the Christian religion, is nothing but a device of the rich to please the poor and keep them under. He

spent his Sabbaths in the tavern—got drunk—was licentious, although a married man. I was frequently solicited by him to draw in this poison—but my father's teaching had too much light in it to be extinguished by such gross blasphemy. His bold assertions had no weight on my mind, and, besides, I observed he had no confidence in them himself. For while he denied there was any devil his curse always was, 'Devil damn.' If there was a high wind during the night, it struck his mind with such terror that he could not stay in the house, and I have known him walk the whole of a stormy night in the fields. I heard him reprove with great severity his bastard daughter, for saying, 'By my faith.' I found no difficulty in disbelieving this inconsistent and absurd creature, and rejected his sentiments with indignation. But Satan, as I believe, took another method to carry his purpose respecting me; for after this man had tried his arguments on me without effect, I found my mind troubled with horrid thoughts about God and revealed religion, which I could not banish. 'How do I know that the Bible is not a cheat? Do not the Turks believe as sincerely in their Koran? Perhaps it may be just as true as the Bible. I see a number of denominations each claiming to be right. Perhaps any of them is as near the truth as our church. Perhaps they are all deluded. Ministers seem to be in earnest when they preach, but they get money for it. What if there be no God,

no religion?' These, and a multitude of similar suggestions, filled me with indescribable terrors and consternation. My belief, which rested chiefly on the authority of my father, seemed now to be shaken off its foundation. I was afraid to believe, yet terrified to disbelieve, and knew not what to do. At length, I thought of an expedient, but not the right one. I thought, if I were only out of hearing and seeing of this brutish man, my mind would become quiet, and my belief would again be settled as it was before. Nobody knew of my trouble, but my determination to leave my place could not be a secret long. My father and uncle were both employed under this man, and might be affected by the step I was about to take, and must at any rate be told. They were strongly opposed to it—But I felt by this time as if I was standing on the brink of hell, and certainly in its vicinity, by staying where I was, and all their arguments did not weigh a feather. I was offered more wages if I would stay, and at the same time I knew not where to go, but the terrors I felt, and the belief that removing from this man would bring relief overcame every other consideration. After I left I was quite happy for a little, and my mind had a short calm. I got a web from another place to weave, and a loom beside two sober men.

"My thoughts several times before this period turned toward the office of the ministry. One time in particular in the church, while

James Gray of Brechin was preaching from these words, 'It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace,' the desire to be a minister arose strong, and to be one like him I was hearing. I thought he was godly and sincere (and I have never thought otherwise of him now thirty years since, and many a time did he warm my heart afterwards:) if I could be as he was, I thought, surely I would be happy. But presently the idea seemed ridiculous in me. I had never been an hour at a day school. I could not write my own name. My father was in absolute need of all my earnings—and besides I durst not speak of it for fear I should be laughed to scorn.

"While I was in the ware-room under the deist aforesaid, my cousin Peter Gordon was licensed to preach, and he paid my father a visit and preached a day in Montrose. I knew the history of his difficulties in getting forward, and the thought of the ministry returned. I thought it was scarcely possible that I could have much greater difficulties than he had, and might not I succeed as well as he? At this time my desire returned, and much stronger than before. I made some endeavours to study the English grammar by myself,—an old grammar having fallen in my way, but secretly, for I durst not speak my desire to any one on earth. But I made little progress, as all my time was needed at my work. My earnings were small, and so the thought of it seemed to be given up as impracticable.

CHAPTER II.

HIS CONVERSION.

"There was a weaver of household cloth who lived next house to ours, James Greig. He was a sober religious man, and an elder in the Burgher congregation. I had become somewhat acquainted with him, and conceived such a friendship for him, that I thought if I were only *beside him*, I would be comfortable; although I had no desire to spend my life in that business. The thoughts of the ministry were never long absent from my mind, after hearing the above sermon; but still I wished to be with this man. Although my father was not very willing, yet he consented, and I was bound an apprentice for three years: I was now seventeen years of age.

"This event in my life I cannot well explain: if viewed in connexion with what came after it, I must consider it one of the mysteries of His providence toward me.

"Soon after this my convictions of sin returned with much greater force and terror than ever before, and I was brought into the greatest distress. How quickly was I made to experience the folly of my hope of being comfortable, by being beside frail man! My distress *he* could not even understand. Now the most horrible atheistical thoughts rushed into my

mind. I could not say that I believed any thing, only this, that I was a sinner, and a very great one. I needed no argument to convince me there was such a thing as guilt, for I felt it sinking me, and the only miracle I could believe in was that I was not in hell. I thought it a wicked mocking to pray to God; if there was a God, he could not in justice hear me. At times I would be afraid to move, lest hell should open beneath me and I be swallowed up. At other times it was suggested to lay aside all pretence to religion, and seek ease in the world, like other men; but my previous convictions of the vanity of all earthly things, were too strong for this to take. For about six months my mind was in horrible darkness; I was afraid also to communicate my thoughts to any one. For weeks I would not speak except what was barely necessary, and some said I was going out of my head!—so little do the generality of men know of the distress of an awakened conscience. Now I consider this great trouble as a mercy, for had it not come, I would have probably reckoned the foreman to have been the only cause of my convictions before, and applauded my own skill in leaving him, and so have thought no more about the matter. But by God's finger, I was at this time pointed to the fountain of all my misery as in my own heart, and I was made to see how brutish I would become if left, notwithstanding my early instruction.

By some means my eye was directed to the

mercy of God in Christ, and I was immediately relieved, and felt as if transported into a new world. In the contemplation of this mercy, my joy and happiness was far beyond expression, and for a season, my delight and enjoyment in spiritual things was exceedingly great, nor do I know that I have ever had its like.

Like many others, I was ignorant of the strength of remaining corruption and Satan's craft, and thought henceforth I should live only to the praise of divine mercy and be happy. About this time I obtained some clear views of the way of salvation by grace, which have never forsaken me to this hour, namely, particular, eternal, unconditional election, and the free offer of Christ as a gift to all that hear the gospel.

I was much helped in my own exercise by meditating on the resolution of the four lepers at the gate of Samaria. 'If we sit still here, we die, if we go into the city, behold the famine. Let us fall to the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.' After this, atheistical thoughts returned, but they were never so powerful nor long-continued, and I was still helped to some view of the truth, upon which they fled. In reflecting upon this period of my life, I cannot but conclude, that had the Lord not been secretly but powerfully on my side, I had sunk first in profligacy and vice, and secondly into Atheism, my landing place might

have been a scaffold, and then in the lake of fire, when by the time I am writing this, my miserable spirit might have been tormented night and day. 'But the snare is broken and I am escaped,' and blessed be the Lord for evermore. 'While I have my being, I will praise him.' Farther, while Satan and that wicked man before mentioned were permitted to unsettle my early belief, which perhaps rested only on the testimony of my parents, and to drive me to the verge of despair, God in his rich mercy directed me to a better foundation, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

"At this time I had a strong desire for religious society, and was received as a member of a fellowship meeting, in which I had much satisfaction and received great benefit during three years I continued in the place. The first opportunity I offered myself for admission to the Lord's table, and was received after a very superficial and to me unsatisfactory examination.

"During the two years that followed there was little variety. Now and then thoughts of the ministry and strong desires for education would return. After some time I obtained liberty to attend an evening school, three months at one time, and six weeks at another, which I spent in writing and arithmetic. When on a visit to my uncle at Cariston, I obtained the loan of a Greek and Latin grammar, and some Latin books my cousin had left, and made some attempts to study these secretly by myself.

At length I came to this conclusion, that if God chose to employ me in his work, he would bestow on me both gifts and means, however improbable it may appear at present, and I resolved to use every means in my power and go forward *as* I could, and *when* I could. After this I was frequently perplexed with this thought: 'But if it be not his will, am I not running unsent? How may I know whether I have a call to proceed or not?' Another thought that troubled me frequently about election, in which I firmly believed, was, 'If I am elected I *will* be saved, however I may live, and if not, I must be lost, whatever means I may use.' And it was my believing the doctrine that made this perplexing to me. It was in a gradual manner, and after much thought, that I got relief by observing in sundry texts of Scripture that election to salvation is the end, sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth are the means, and that they are inseparable in the purpose of God.

"Another thing that troubled me much was, God's making a free offer of the gospel to the non-elect. Unless their hearts were renewed, they could not receive it. But God's secret purpose was not to renew their hearts, yet I must believe he is perfectly sincere with them and infinitely removed from cruelly tantalizing any of his creatures. Hence arose my perplexity. It was a length of time before I came to see that it is the goodness and mercy of God to make this offer to them, and that it

is according to the tenor of the covenant of works under which they are, to command them to believe and receive it under pain of damnation, and at the same time to assure them, that, according to the covenant of grace, eternal life will infallibly follow believing. When God says to the man dead in trespasses and sins, 'Repent and believe,' it is no more than is said to the bankrupt, 'Pay me what thou owest,' otherwise I will cast thee into prison.

"About this time I was led frequently to desire I might have a sight of the vanity of the world, and have it deeply impressed. A prayer which has been many ways answered since that time by afflictions the most deep and painful. I do not remember of any thing these thirty years which drew my affection, which has not either disappointed me, or been taken away. 'By terrible works in righteousness' God has expressed his answer to me. With power and pain have the words of the prophet been made to sound in my ear, 'Trust not in man, for wherein is he to be accounted of?' Notwithstanding all this, I have been very slow in placing my confidence in Him who has never disappointed me.

"I came at length to a settled purpose (God willing) to prepare for the ministry. But now I found a new difficulty, which I had not thought of before. It was the letting of my mind be known. To proceed without doing this was impossible. But how shall I do it—or to whom? Will not my purpose be laid to

a vain conceit in my own powers and goodness? (in which there is too much truth:) Shall I not be a scorn and a laughing-stock for thinking such a thing to be attainable, poor and unpatronised as I am? And in this I was not mistaken. Abundance of ridicule and mockery came in from all sides, and by a number I was reputed insane. There was one, however, who entertained and valued the thought—my only religious confidant at that time—*my mother*. By degrees I learned to bear it, upon this ground,—'nothing is impossible with God.' If he is pleased to send me to preach, I *will* attain to the means; and, if not, I feel no guilt for desiring it—if only my motives are what they should be.

"About this time I formed an acquaintance with Elizabeth Greig, which I have regarded as not a small mercy from the Lord to me. She was my employer's niece. He happened one day while we were alone to give me some account of his brother John Greig. 'He was,' he said, 'a member of the established Church; but some time before his death he became acquainted with the principles of the Secession Church, and attended on the ministry of James Gray of Brechin, to whom he expressed on his death-bed a strong desire to join in full communion, if his life were spared, which, however, was not the case. While attending Mr. Gray's ministry, his daughter Elizabeth, then about thirteen years old, went with him, and after his death, continued to go alone:

much against the will of all her family, she joined in full communion at the age of fifteen, and was continuing steadfast in her profession up to the time of this conversation, in the face of much harsh treatment and reproach from her family.'

"This simple narrative made on me a deep impression. What a contrast, thought I, with most of those about her age! How congenial would such a mind be to me! What happiness could I have in the society of such a one through life! After some months I had an opportunity to see her, and these impressions were strengthened. But such a connexion I durst hardly think of. I could not for a moment admit the thought of giving up the ministry, and to ask her to wait eight years for an uncertainty appeared unreasonable. Moreover, by this time I had some thought of being a missionary to America, if I should ever be thought qualified. My esteem rising above these considerations, after bringing the matter to the throne of grace, I opened my mind to her, at the same time acquainting her frankly with the disposition which I desired to make of my future life. When an answer came, it expressed, I thought, no decision. But it concluded with this text:—'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Then, thought I, if I can in faith and sincerity follow this counsel, which is God's own word, she may herself be added

to me. And she *was* mine awhile; and the happy moments of spiritual intercourse and joint supplication at our Father's throne, both before and after our union, told to my heart an experience that I was not deceived in her—that the Lord himself had given her to me.

CHAPTER III.

"I purchased the remaining time of my apprenticeship, (about six weeks,) bought Ainsworth's Dictionary and some of the classics, and entered the Latin School in Montrose, in the fore-part of the summer of 1809.

"When out of school I wove sail-cloth for the *foreman* whom I left three years ago, and studied my lessons at night. This was hard labour. I thought within myself, God could easily incline some in the congregation to give me a little help; but I was afraid to mention such a thing to him in prayer, lest it might not be his will. However, he did stir up one of them (my old mistress in the bake-house) to pay my first quarter fees. She promised a great deal more, when I was suddenly lifted up, confiding in man, and overlooking the kindness which God had sent me unasked. His mercy soon sent the reproof of this my sin and folly. A man whose spiritual relation to me obligated him to act a very different part, told her I was

a fool, and she ought not to countenance me. This advice was taken, and my bright prospects vanished. Here was a practical comment on the prophet's words, 'Trust not in a friend, put no confidence in a guide—therefore I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.' But I did not give proper attention to it.

"About the same time the old deistical foreman found that I was attending school with a view to the ministry, and although I did as much work as my equals, his hatred to religion made him refuse to give me work. But I soon got it elsewhere. Thus God measured and tempered his reproof to what I was able to bear.

"After some time I found this to be a severe and slow way of progressing, and thought of opening a school somewhere. I was aware my qualifications were deficient, but thought by diligent application to improve. I made the attempt in part of the town of Brechin where a school was needed. In passing to it, I had some deep and pensive reflections. I was leaving my father's house, perhaps never again to reside there—my mother weakly—I might never enjoy her company again. I was going to make a very doubtful experiment—ill-qualified—unpatronised, and at this time about fourteen dollars in debt. If I failed of success, my hope of attaining to the ministry, in all probability, was at an end. Why I did not give up at this time, and turn back, I cannot tell, unless His hand unseen was moving me forward.

"My attempt was regarded and spoken of in my native town as a sign of insanity; nevertheless, through the kindness of God, in his overruling providence, I succeeded in raising a school, to the surprise of myself and others. My commencement was in January, 1810.

"About six weeks after this my mother died. This I felt to be a severe stroke. If my spirits were raised a little too high by my success, they now received a check. She was the first and principal one to whom I could speak freely on things spiritual.

"In the Spring I became acquainted with David Ronald, who had finished his second session at college: he continued a steady and valuable friend as long as I remained in the country, offering his assistance to me in my Latin studies. He was a good and safe adviser also, in most things about which I needed advice. Thus God raised me up a helper where I looked not for it.

"My school did so well that I was enabled to pay my debt, and to purchase several articles which I much needed, and a fair prospect of having something to bear part of my expense next winter at college. Perhaps I was too much elated with this, but I was soon brought low enough.

"There was to be at that time a balloting for militia, whose term of service was seven years. My name was in the box at Montrose, where I had paid my *all* to be ensured against serving, if I should be drawn. But this

was not the worst, for I found that my name was at the same time in the box at Brechin. This was not only hard, but unjust, according to the militia law, and I thought, if I could bring the case before the proper authority, I would surely be relieved; but after spending a week in going from one great man to another, I found there was no redress. Parish teachers were exempt from military service, but I was not a parish teacher. Any teacher who would take the oath of abjuration and allegiance could get free; but on account of several things implied in these, I could not swear them without discarding weighty things in our religious profession. I was for a time in great perplexity, for besides the blasting of my hopes of the ministry if I should be drawn, there was nothing more revolting to my feelings than the idea of being a soldier. But, thanks to a kind Providence, the matter was left solely to his decision in the two places at the same time, whether I should be made a butcher of men against my will, rather than a minister of salvation—and he decided I should not be balloted. 'The lot was cast into the lap, but the disposal thereof was from the Lord.'

"The time drew near to go to college: my funds were indeed expended, but not my desire to go. I knew of no way money could be raised. All my friends were against my going. It was so ordered in Providence that a week before the time, a woman came to inquire of my aunt, with whom I was lodging, if

she knew any one wishing to borrow a little money? I borrowed it, (about twenty-three dollars) and on this small sum I started for Edinburgh University on Nov. 10th, 1810. During the Christmas vacation I returned (distance 70 miles) to raise, if possible, as much more money as would enable me to exist through the winter session. After much trouble, useless travel, and cold-hearted refusal, I succeeded in raising ten dollars more. At this time Elizabeth Greig and I had an interview, and after much serious consultation we engaged jointly in religious covenanting; as follows:

"We do, with uplifted hands, swear by Him who shall judge our hearts at the last day, that we depend absolutely on Christ for the salvation of our souls—that there can be salvation by no other—that we can of ourselves do no act, think no thought acceptable in the sight of God. That we devote ourselves wholly to the will of God, and that we will not hearken to the counsel of men contrary thereto, but shall be denied to ourselves. That we shall be faithful witnesses to the truth of the gospel against erroneous opinions of men. And being called thereto, we shall spend our whole united strength of soul and body while in this world, in publishing abroad these things. These, with every other duty, in the strength of that promise, 'Lo, I am with you always.'

We say amen, and subscribe

ALEXANDER GORDON,
ELIZABETH GREIG.

Dec. 27th, 1810.

"I started with the above small sum for Edinburgh, and by some other small sums obtained, I was enabled to continue the usual time. During this winter I had some very deep impressions of the shortness of time and the certainty of death—and what my disembodied soul might first meet; an angel from heaven to conduct me there, or a devil to drag me to hell? and sleep frequently left me.

"About the end of March, 1811, I returned to Brechin to take charge of my school, and found that the young man whom I had left in it had in some measure supplanted me in the minds of the parents. The second day the scholars were, in consequence of his influence, diminished to a few. This in my circumstances was a heavy stroke; but I needed it at this time to keep me humble, for instead of being thankful that I had, with so many difficulties, got through the first winter at college, I was becoming vain."

CHAPTER IV.

It is generally supposed that poverty has a tendency to contract the sympathies of the heart, and make us selfish and illiberal. It had not this effect on Mr. Gordon. We find him at this time, while struggling so hard to maintain himself in procuring an education, with kindly fraternal feeling caring for his little orphan brother.

"This summer," says he, "I brought my brother David to Brechin, to give him what education I could. He was then in his seventh year. I endeavoured to suggest to his mind the idea of the ministry. I thought, if I could proceed, he could follow in my rear."

Very gloomy indeed, one would think, the prospect must have appeared for either of them —requiring strong faith and perseverance— These were both given to him in an eminent degree, so that he was kept from desponding under the many trials he was called to endure.

"In the early part of this summer," he says, "I was sorely puzzled with the prospect of the difficulties in proceeding through a course of education, and sometimes considered them insurmountable. But I was quickly relieved by the following train of thought: "Cast thou thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." Look to the present duty, and leave all the rest to God,—if he has designed you for the ministry, he will open the way to it.

In the month of August this summer, public religious covenanting was observed in the Associate congregation in Brechin. We both [probably Miss Greig] embraced the opportunity and lifted up our hands publicly as we had privately before for the reformation, as witnessed by the Secession. One hundred and eleven persons joined. It was the most solemn day in my life up to that time.

About six weeks afterwards my father was

taken ill of his last sickness. The melancholy duty of superintending the affairs of the family devolved on me. My early and best counsellor was now gone, and I was now left on the broad world. The family (four of us in number) was now broken up and scattered, and we have never since met altogether.

"After this event, I had great enjoyment in sacramental solemnities; so I found that when God smites with the one hand, he supports with the other."

The difficulties he had to encounter in his present situation induced him to try and raise a school in Edinburgh, where he might teach and attend college.

After seeing his brother provided for, he succeeded in raising a tolerably good school. In view of the difficulties he had to overcome, he says: "It is a great kindness of God in his holy providence that I succeeded."

The duties incumbent on him in his present situation were, however, very laborious, and made serious inroads on his health. He says: "My school house was new, and the walls still wet. There were also three of us who lodged in one room and slept in one bed, which caused me to have a thorough sweating every night. In addition to this, the arrangement of college hours and my school hours made me to be heated and cooled alternately every two hours. The consequence was—loss of appetite and sleep, and a cough which was supposed to come from the lungs.

"The third winter came, its difficulties were not diminished, though its labours were increased. In addition to what I had before, I had several private lessons to give, and the Hebrew class to attend for myself. I had also to travel six miles and teach at two places before breakfast, being from 6 A. M. to 9 P. M. engaged. By this my health was much impaired.

"This winter I was greatly distressed to meet a small debt of one guinea. The last hour of patience was just at hand, and I knew of no possible way of raising it. Just at this moment a person knocked at my school door and asked me to call at her house so soon as my school was out. It was to give her son private lessons in book-keeping. As soon as I agreed to do it, she took a guinea out of her pocket, saying, 'This will pay a part!' Had it fallen from heaven, I should not have been more convinced that God sent it. 'He is a very present help in time of trouble.' I was reproved and ashamed. Why did I fret? Why did I not lay my trouble before him? God's interposition is far more visible and impressive, when he brings us through great straits, than when we have always plenty. And I think it evident that the design of such straits is often to shut me up to look to *Him*, and to make his arm bare in my deliverance.

house of our worthy professor. As I rose to come away, his good lady showed me out and put a guinea in my hand. Nothing was less expected and nothing could have been to me at that time more seasonable. Soon after this I got four pupils to instruct privately in mathematics and medical Latin, and by this means, I got along this winter.

"Now, the long looked for time drew near, the meeting of Synod from which we expected license, and to be appointed missionaries to the United States. Some years before this, Mr. Peter Bullions and myself had given in our names as volunteers to go as missionaries to that country. The Synod accepted our offer, and appointed us to be taken on trial for license. Our last trial was received at Hawgate on Monday after the sacrament, and we were licensed there, I think about the 25th of June, 1817.

"Our pecuniary necessities were now, however, greater than ever, as unless we would go to Nova Scotia, the Synod were unwilling to pay our expenses. On the last Sabbath of June, I preached my first Sabbath in Arbroath with Rev. James Miller. On the Monday I married Elizabeth Greig. Next Sabbath, I preached one part in Cairney hill and the other at Dunfermline, and the third and last Sabbath in Scotland, in Leith and Edinburgh. When we were within a few days of sailing, it seemed impossible for us to raise funds to pay our way. Promises to assist us were sometimes made

packet gone. This singular dispensation in Providence I have never understood. One result was, that I gained as much money as discharged all my debts which were now considerable. But I lost one course of Professor Paxton's lectures. I see the very particular care of Divine Providence over me, a poor unworthy sinner. My life was wonderfully preserved, and my pecuniary circumstances greatly improved. I am bound therefore to serve him both with my life and substance."

All who enjoyed an acquaintance with our departed brother, will have noticed how carefully he observed the dealings of God's providence towards him. Circumstances which others would pass over unnoticed or soon forget, were subjects to him of deep reflection, as he seemed always to exercise a lively faith in the declaration, that all things shall work together for good to God's people, and that 'not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice,' &c.

"The summer of 1816 I took for recreation, and lived with an uncle at Carriston, four miles west of Brechin. I attended the winter session at Edinburgh university—my want of funds, as before, being my chief difficulty. I had nothing, even before the classes began and the lectures ended. But again the kindness of Providence met the necessities of this period with enough. One morning I went out to take a walk, and turn my mind off my difficulties, and in my course called at the

aken a passage in the packet for Leith, with a view to attend the lectures of Professor Paxton; but the wind blew from the south, and we could not get out of the harbour. After waiting between two and three weeks, it shifted fair, we weighed anchor and set sail. But we had not been out more than eighteen hours, till it shifted to the south again, and we were forced to put about again for Kirkwall. After relanding I was much afraid that I would lose that session at the divinity class, and be kept a year back; so I thought to cross the Pentland Frith, and go by land a distance of three hundred miles. But when I called on the Rev. Wm. Broadfoot, (our minister there,) on the day I should start, he strongly opposed my going that way, and I was kept in suspense until the ferry-boat in which I should have crossed went off. Now here was the mercy. The boat had been out but a short time till she was caught in a squall, was quickly dashed in pieces, and all on board, seven in number, perished.

"The wind continued contrary. In the mean time the parish school was vacant, and they wished me to engage for the winter. After waiting another two weeks for the wind to change, I reluctantly consented to begin school on the Monday *if the wind did not change.* The hour for opening the school came and still the wind was not changed, I went to school and taught till noon, when I dismissed. Lo! the wind is changed and the

CHAPTER V.

"The fall of this year, (1812) I entered as a hearer the divinity class under Professor Paxton—and the summer following (1813) I was examined by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and admitted a member. This was an important step to me. On this occasion I again pledged myself to Christ's service, and to a testimony for a covenanted reformation.

In consequence of my hard labour, my health was evidently impaired, and my cough continued. I was anxious to obtain a situation as tutor in a family, where my labour would be light and I would have time to study. A situation of this kind soon presented itself in a family belonging to our communion in the Island of Stronsay in the Orkneys. I accepted the terms and sailed from Leith in the Sir Joseph Banks in the month of October. This voyage proved very serviceable to my health.

Here I remark the kindness of Providence; for the voyage and sea air were of great benefit to me, and I passed in this family two years with quietness, and I hope some profit both of a literary and spiritual nature. Here I was taught that to be alone is sometimes both desirable and useful to the spiritual life.

"In the fall of 1815, when I left that island there was an occurrence which I thought remarkable." I had come to Kirkwall, and

and broken.. We had frequent occasion, in a short space of time, to see how little man is to be trusted, and 'how present a help God is, in time of trouble.'

"We set sail from Leith on July 20th, and after being forty-nine days out, we arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where we stopt ten days and took passage for New York, where we arrived safely, September 27th. There was nothing very remarkable in our passage, except that when we came up with land, the captain supposed us to be one hundred and fifty miles out, but when the mist cleared away we were near enough to see people on the land. Apparently its clearing away was the means of saving us from a watery grave.

Here it is proper to pause and reflect. The last three months may be said to be the most eventful period in my life. God had in a very wonderful manner borne me forward to the point to which my prayers and desires had long tended. I was married to the person of my choice. I was licensed to preach the gospel. I was missioned to America, and safely arrived:—which events, eight years ago, appeared so extremely improbable, that the very mention of them subjected me to the imputation of insanity. How came it, then? Not, certainly, from me. Many of my constitutional sins, particularly impatience, were calculated to defeat my purpose. Not owing to my goodness. No, for beyond a doubt I was oftentimes borne up under difficulties by

the force of a pride, which abhorred the idea of surrendering and of becoming a laughing-stock. Not by my wealth, or that of my friends, nor by the power of popular feeling; the reverse of all this was the case.

"But it was God that had chosen a thing that was despised, weak, base, and foolish, and called him to preach the gospel of his Son. 'There is nothing too hard for the Lord.' I trust I did look to him, (though imperfectly,) to bring me forward, and he has answered me 'by fearful works in righteousness. He has led me the blind in a way I knew not, and in a path I had not trod. He has made darkness light before me, and crooked things straight. His way was through the sea, and his footsteps in the mighty waters.'

"But while the Lord did great things for me, I was not duly thankful, nor was I stirred up to magnify his name. I was not humble, but rather the contrary, elated, self-confident, and vain. While the greatest difficulties presented themselves before me, I did not give them the sufficiently grave consideration which they demanded, nor make them always occasions of prayer. I was too much given to levity and jesting, and without that habitual seriousness which belongs to the deportment of a minister. I did not have a proper view of the importance of the witnessing profession I had solemnly made. I did not feel the weight of the work and office on which I had entered. I did not ask at a throne of grace

for the text on which I might most edify. I did not feel much of the truths which I preached. I did not preach to myself, but only to the people. I had a great confidence in speaking, but not on proper grounds.

I saw none of these glaring inconsistencies at the time; but God was preparing a rod under which I have since been made to see them, and many others, with tears and sorrow, and to abhor myself on account of them, which I wish to continue doing to the grave.

"I remained in New York and preached for Mr. Hamilton till I obtained some directions for my future course. We received many expressions of kindness, both from him and his hearers. The Synod's treasurer also gave me one hundred dollars, with which I got a horse and saddle. I was directed to go to Guinston, York County, Pennsylvania. Accordingly, I, my wife, and brother David, whom I had brought with me, set out for Philadelphia, where we halted a week, and preached for Dr. Banks. Here, also, we received great kindness. The next Sabbath, which was the third Sabbath of October, I preached at Guinston, and became acquainted with my worthy father, Rev. Francis Pringle, of Carlisle, who was there at the time. It was agreed that I should supply there nine Sabbaths, and then go to the Carolinas for three months.

"The people of Guinston also showed great kindness, and, before the time was out, there were some motions towards a call for me.

"About the beginning of January, 1818, I set out for the Carolinas. In accomplishing this tour, I found it was no easy matter, even for a short time, to forsake *all* and go to serve Christ where I was altogether unknown.

"The first Saturday night found me near Harper's Ferry, on the Potomac. A more wicked place I have not seen. I prayed that the Lord, in his providence, would lead me to some house, on the Sabbath evening, that had respect for His name. Sabbath morning I set out eight miles to the Ferry, where I preached from 1 John ii. 6. After sermon, an old man by the name of Annan invited me to his house; indeed he was the only person there who seemed to have any respect for religion. I also preached at Woodstock, Virginia. I arrived next Sabbath at Rockbridge, where I divided the day with Mr. Heron. Next Sabbath I preached at Statesville, North Carolina, after which I came upon the ground of my appointments, where I found a people apparently desirous of ordinances — but their holding slaves seemed to me to be a great contrast with it.

"During this tour I experienced much kindness and some deliverances from God in His holy providence. On March 22d, I arrived at home in safety, and found all well.

"April 7th made me a father to a son. In this was His mercy visible to me. This new relation brought important duties with it. But

it ought to be viewed as only requiring me to draw the more earnestly and frequently from the promise.

CHAPTER VI.

"August 18th I was ordained to the office of the ministry at Guinston. This was another solemn and express devotement of myself to a witnessing profession—but which, at that time, had not a due weight on my mind. I was already caught by the popular enthusiasm, and wished to distinguish myself as an advocate for all those liberal measures by which I thought this happy age was triumphing over bigotry. And my conversation, preaching, and prayers were full of it. O what a fool and how inconsistent I was! But God was preparing to break the charm, and set me again free. There was no place or house belonging to the congregation, and I was, or thought I was, under the necessity of buying land and building a house. The latter was a tedious, troublesome, and very expensive business. It brought me much in debt, and greatly harassed my mind, and became a great diversion from study. It gave me occasion, many times, to know what people really are. And while I was in trouble of another sort, these matters were also in progress, and tended greatly to increase it.

"There was a minister belonging to the General Assembly in my vicinity, whom, for his talents and soundness in doctrine, I esteemed, and he in turn commended my liberal views. We met, on an occasion, for the examination of the Sabbath Schools. Mr. M., in his part of the service, was pleased to sing Dr. Watts' compositions. I was liberal to my shame and sorrow, but not so liberal as that. But 'the backslider in heart is filled with his own ways,'—and I now was. I felt it at the time to be God's reproof. Although I had several times publicly inveighed against human compositions, it did not hinder the people, (my own and others,) from believing that I was, at this time, conniving at the practice, because I was co-operating with one who was opposed to strictness in profession.

"I deemed it my duty to publish my views on psalmody, which I did, in a small book entitled, 'The Design and Use of the Book of Psalms.' From the moment of its publication my popularity with many was ruined. Coldness and bitter opposition now occupied the place of adulation and friendship. At the time, I thought this was hard treatment, but have long since viewed it as one of God's many mercies to me, and as such I here record it. I was now made to think deeply. I saw what I had been doing, even loving the praise of men more than the praise of God, and began in earnest to retrace my steps. . . . And now that I was awake, His rebukes came heavier and faster upon me.

"My second son, a child of eighteen months, had two of his fingers cut off with the axe, by his brother, who was also a child. My third child, a daughter, about the same time became very sickly; her mother, whose constitution was beginning to sink under consumption, was unable to nurse. Mrs. Martin's family took the child and nursed it, but it grew worse, and on Saturday before the sacrament, (which I was obliged to dispense alone at this time,) just before I rose to dispense tokens, one of the elders came to the pulpit and asked me to come out, when they told me the child was dying, and to consider whether I would proceed with the sacrament or not. This was a painful moment. I must either give up the dispensing the sacrament, or I must not even see my dying babe. I decided on the latter alternative, and proceeded to dispense tokens. She died that evening—and was buried on Sabbath morning before worship. With a heavy heart I ascended the pulpit. But I will bear witness to His loving-kindness—I know not that I ever had greater freedom or soul-enjoyment in the work than on that day. This stroke came down heavily upon my wife and accelerated the progress of her complaint. Having, previously to this time, tried several means without effect, I had recourse to travelling with her. After coming as far as the city of New York, we remained three weeks consulting Dr. Buchan, and using a variety of means. We sailed up the North River, and

came as far as Argyle, and returned home after an absence of three months. But all was in vain. She continued worse through the winter, and, on the 12th of March, 1822, she died, just ten months after the child. This was a sore stroke indeed! My beloved partner, with whom I had so often taken sweet counsel, gone! The wife of my youth, gone! and I am left with two small children, far from all relations! . . . Still, it was a parting to meet again."

Mr. Gordon gives a circumstantial account of the soul exercises of his wife during her last illness, affectionately treasuring what fell from her lips. From what he has recorded, it appears evident that she was one of Christ's children, whom he upheld and comforted in the valley of death. The parting scene he thus describes:

"About three days before she departed, taking our oldest son John by the hand, she said, 'My dear boy, I am going to leave you, you are no more mine, I give you unto God, and you must be God's boy, and He will take care of you: the Lord bless you and do you good, and raise you up to serve him, and at last may he receive you into his kingdom, that we may meet you at his right hand.' Then, taking his brother Alexander by the hand, she said, 'Poor boy, you are no more mine, I give you up unto God, may the God of the covenant bless the child, and preserve him from evil, and receive him at last.' After a short

time, she said, 'My dear, I almost forgot you. You are no more mine. I give you up to God; there is no fear of you. The Lord will take care of you, and enable you to preach Christ, and carry you through; He will enable you to train up your children for Him.'

"She departed with these words on her lips: 'Now into thy hands I commend my soul.'

"The Lord made use of this sore bereavement to convince me more than I had ever been of the blessed reality of religion,—that God is in it of a truth. I was enabled, some time before her death, to consent to His holy will; and to me it is most certain that no other principle than His own grace could have brought me to it. Some time before, these words, Psalm xxxvii., came very often, with a great deal of power, on my mind: 'Thy way to God commit, him trust, it bring to pass shall he,' which, at the time, gave my mind, though in an undiscernible manner, great support. I felt, more than I had ever done, loose to the world. It led me to take a broad view of the leading of God's providence towards me, and of my own ways under it. I trust I was now in earnest about my witnessing profession, and that I took up with it as containing the grounds on which I desire to breathe out my soul at last. I obtained a near view of death, and through our last conversation I saw something of the glories of the upper world. As to her, I obtained the clearest

evidence of her entering eternal rest. I looked back, and saw with a satisfying clearness, that I was mercifully led to place my affections on her, although men condemned it at the time, as weakness, imprudence, and folly. On many accounts, therefore, I desire to praise him even for this very sore stroke.

Before this time, I knew very little of the way and manner of conversing with dying saints. Now I am made to apply myself to it in earnest. I was brought, in the same way, to seek to adapt my sermons to my hearers as dying men. I was taught to sympathize with the suffering and the bereaved. I have been convinced, these eighteen years, that this was to correct me for my loose views, commonly termed liberality, and for not being more heartily attached to the reformation, as witnessed for by the Secession, which is usually called bigotry. And I here solemnly testify that since I came to this mind, I have experienced more quiet and satisfaction in my mind than I ever did before. It may not be improper to record, that immediately subsequent to these things, I had, for several months, the greatest freedom in preaching which I have ever experienced. I was also brought to a true view of the state of matters generally in the churches of the reformation, and that, instead of being entered on the millennial state, they are sliding back from former attainments at a rapid rate; that the way of truth is evil spoken of, and the way of man's devising

highly extolled. The bringing of me, who was in so fair a way to follow the multitude, to this clear and true view, I have ever considered a singular favour bestowed on me. Blessed affliction, which brought forth such fruits!

"I had at this time, for a short space, great comfort and tranquillity; but after events showed that it was a preparation for new trials.

"As I was preaching, one very sultry day, in the woods at Lower Chanceford, a severe nervous affection came on me, producing giddiness, a defect in mental energy, and especially recollection. Now all my boldness left me, and a continual fear of losing my recollection, and of falling through my discourse, succeeded it. If I had to stand in a high pulpit, my giddiness and fear of falling into confusion increased. My distress, in this way, has, hundreds of times, been indescribable, and as often, upon mere human principles, insupportable. When the hour for commencing public worship was announced, it would make me quake from head to foot. I have often ascended the pulpit like one going to execution, and often could not hold up the psalm book for trepidation: a strange face in the audience would fill me with confusion.

"In addition to this, the most distressing thoughts were injected just at the moment I was going to begin; such as—'Now you will fail in your discourse—you will disgrace the

ministry and speak nonsense—better take your hat and run out of the house—you had better not have meddled with the ministry at all, &c.' All my strength was, at such times, expended in trying to preserve my recollection, instead of entering into the spirit of the subject; which thing, itself, did often bring me to the point of confusion. I shall never forget the time when I first rose to preach in the city of Baltimore. Every thing and every person, except one, was strange. It was an attempt to set up the Secession in that city. If I failed, my disgrace would pass to the account of our profession, and our enemies, of whom there were several present, would have a triumph. My whole frame felt on the point of convulsion.

"This has been a very sore correction, and it has continued, though not always with equal severity, now nearly seventeen years. Yet, on account of what I have learned under it, and would not probably have learned without it, I reckon it a mercy, and set it to the account of His love. I was taught by this that confidence in speaking, and preparation for it, depend wholly on the great Head of the church. If He but touch them, they vanish—that if I have freedom in preaching I must be indebted to him for it, and that I must, every time I am called to preach, cast myself upon him for aid. It brought me, not only to go direct every time for aid, but to be content with His sovereign will, to be carried through

with fulness or forced to conclude through scarcity—to be something or nothing. It shut me up to the study of the promises, and especially of that which He gave among the last things which He did: Matth. xxviii. 20, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' 2 Cor. xii. 9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness,' and 'My presence shall go with you,' &c. At one or other of these, I have often, after I was in the pulpit, been made to grasp, as one feeling himself just about to sink. And I here record, that the promises have been so far made out to me, that I have never yet been left to that which I greatly feared, and frequently I have got through so well as to be utterly astonished at the measure of freedom I enjoyed, having begun fainting and left off triumphing, ashamed at my own unbelieving fear and unworthiness.

"While I was struggling against the evil just mentioned, I had several other trials to encounter, which still farther showed me my own sinfulness and need of divine strength at all times. A matter of difficulty arose between the session and me, which disturbed our peace for a time, and was the occasion of some stumbling at their profession. Although many reproachful things were said without foundation, yet I was drawn into a fault, partly by an imperfect view of discipline, and partly by an excess of sympathetic regard for a member of a very worthy family. This affair showed me

many things of great utility, but especially the importance of being thoroughly acquainted with the discipline of the church; which, more than ever, I now studied; and the extreme danger there is in being too much influenced in the exercise of it by regard even to worthy persons.

"Several other trials now came upon me at once. The persecuting tongue was set against me. The occasion of this seemed to be the little book I had published on the psalms. Attempts were made, first, to destroy my character and usefulness, and, when that could not be done, to destroy my credit. In the short space of six months, seven suits were brought against me for debts, some of them real, but most of them pretended. For a length of time I was kept in fear of being sold out by the sheriff. This fear at length induced me to sell out, myself, and owe no man any thing, and leave the place. Upon looking back on these thoughts, I am disposed to ascribe them chiefly to the spirit of free masonry, which I had previously attacked in a public discourse.

"My conscience, too, spoke in terrible accents to this purpose:—

'Fools for their sin and their offence
Do sore affliction bear.'

"Among the multitude of thoughts, these came with force:—'It may be I am nothing but a hypocrite, after all my professions and preachings.' Although suffering very unjustly

at the hand of man, yet these sufferings from the hand of God are nothing to what I deserve. The world knows not the hundredth part of my vileness. I am utterly unworthy of the place I hold. The very idea that the gospel is preached by such as I, begets horror. Nobody could think so meanly of me as I did of myself. In addition to all the rest, I was continually borne down by fearful apprehensions of death.

"I will now state what I believe to have been some of the reasons why these sore trials were sent me. And, first, it was not because he had taken away his love or made false his promise, or shut up his tender mercy in his wrath. No. But my spirit was not sufficiently broken by preceding trials. It recovered *too quickly* from their humbling influence. The causes of my former afflictions did not weigh enough upon the heart. There were several things in my way inconsistent with the Christian and the minister. Much of ministerial deportment I had never yet attained to at all. I still wanted qualifications to deal with the afflicted as they should be. I had indeed serious thoughts about the ministry but not habitually weighed with it. I had not yet begun in earnest to preach every time to *myself*, as well as to the people. These have appeared to be the 'somewhat against me.' I will now record to his mercy, by what means I was kept from sinking under these troubles, and brought through them.

"For good reasons I again entered the marriage relation, and found in my new compan-

ion a helper in my troubles. She, besides being a feeling and kind mother, was a companion in spiritual things. By her means, in no small degree, the Lord was pleased to help me. This was one means. Another was, that though some who were friends before became enemies, there were others who now became warm friends, because they believed me to be in earnest about the profession, who had before this been unkind. This lightened the burden, and was some evidence that God had not forsaken me.

"But chiefly, that precious book of Psalms about which the affliction seemed to take its rise, was the medium through which the Spirit of God was pleased to pour in his wine and oil into my wounds. Sometimes so abundantly was this done, while engaged in family worship, that we could not contain. Before this I saw their suitableness, but now I felt it; which, besides the immediate consolation, gave me a new and strong evidence that Christ's present truth is in them; and, that whatever it might be for which God was contending with me, it was *not for writing* in defence of the Psalms. Another means of help was freedom in prayer, which I experienced at that time. Sometimes, indeed, I was much straitened when alone, which caused uneasiness and fear lest my freedom at other times was not granted so much to me as to those who were hearing. Still it was a great relief to be able in any way to pour out my complaint before God. About this

time I read Dr. Owen's work on the 130th Psalm. From it I learned that others had been in as great troubles, and that how deep soever I was sunk, there was forgiveness with God and mercies on which, as set forth in the word, if I could only trust and wait God's time, I would certainly get up again.

Also I was greatly refreshed at sacramental occasions, so that I thought myself almost as comfortable as I had ever been. On one occasion these words bore upon my mind with great force—'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore in loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' At another time, while sitting at the table at Carlisle, the Rev. F. Pringle serving the table, these words fell upon my mind with very sensible comfort, Gen. xvii. 7: 'I am your God, and the God of your seed.' And, at another time, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Never did medicine so well suit a diseased body as these words did my troubled soul at that time. It has been my endeavour to have them so imprinted on my mind, that they might come to my aid when dying. With this view I have preached on them, and spoken them to the afflicted, and the dying, and now have written them. And I hope the great Remembrancer will keep them for me against that time.

I have said some of the suits brought against me were for debt; I also owed several sums for which I was not sued. This gave me a great deal of uneasiness, and we were led fre-

quently to bring the matter to the throne of grace, and plead that we might be enabled to 'owe no man any thing,' and also to 'give to him that needeth.' At the same time we resolved to get nothing we could want, and to put up with any way that was honest and decent: by this means things grew no worse, but rather better.

This, however, was not the way God designed to answer our prayers. One man to whom we owed a sum, was desirous to possess my farm, and was threatening to sell it by the sheriff. To prevent this my only alternative was to sell it myself, and pay him, which I did, and paid every other cent I owed. But for the same reason that I could not pay without selling my farm, I could not stay in the place and support my family and credit, and so my relation to the congregation of Guinston was dissolved Oct. 20th, 1825.

"A little before this time Mr. Wm. Morris of Baltimore had applied to the Presbytery of Philadelphia for preaching, and I was regularly appointed to supply there, which I did for the space of nine months. In Mr. M. I found a most worthy friend and a zealous supporter of a testimony for reformation principles. Chiefly by his instrumentality, I was enabled to organize a small society. I proceeded in March, 1826, to the election of elders, of whom he was chosen one. They were ordained, and the Lord's supper dispensed in fall of the same year by Mr. Heron.

"I have many reasons for looking back to that short period as a time of many mercies. I was much refreshed in body and mind, by the change of place, labour and company, especially that of Mr. M. When I consider the opposition to our profession, my own disadvantageous appearance and manner, my trouble from giddiness and fear of falling into confusion, it appears a great mercy that I succeeded at all.

"Truly 'I was with them in weakness and fear, and much trembling.' At this time a prayer formerly put up was answered very fully; namely, that my time and attention might be wholly taken up in the work. But I found the labour too hard for flesh and blood to continue long. To keep me humble, I discovered that one of our small company thought that change of preachers would be desirable—I at once concurred, and agreeably to the appointment of Synod, moved with my family in September, 1826, within the bounds of Presbytery of Cambridge. We lived first in the town of Cambridge, where we remained about a year. In this Presbytery we were to have new mercies and new trials.

Sept. 12th. "Both mind and body seemed for some time to be braced in this Northern climate. I found many persons with whom I enjoyed the sweetest spiritual converse, than which nothing can be more enlivening or useful to a minister or private Christian. In September, 1827, two petitions were laid before the Presbytery for my services, one from Ryegate, and

one from Putnam. The Presbytery decided I should go to the latter. And on July 2, 1828, I was installed pastor of the congregation. Shortly after a considerable number of very worthy persons took sick and died, and it would seem as if I were sent to them. I hence took occasion to learn more habitual gravity and seriousness. And to be more particular in prayer about myself and my people, and especially to seek divine leading in choosing every text.

Although not in its place, I desire to notice, that during the two years and nine months I was without charge, going from place to place, the kindness of Providence was so great that instead of falling in arrears, I increased in substance, so that I was able to give a little to him that needeth. Herein was prayer answered, which was offered years before.

I also record it as a great favour in holy Providence, that I have had as free access to the press as any man who had money at his command, through which I have had opportunity of speaking to all parts of the Associate Church and to the world on all points of the *present truth*. With an humble desire to defend a covenanted reformation, I have written a considerable number of short essays. What profit they may have been to others, I cannot tell; but they afforded (the truths, I mean,) great satisfaction to me, as oftentimes, in writing, I came to greater clearness in the matter than I had before. This opportunity was afforded me in the 'Religious Monitor.'

From the second to the fifteenth volume inclusive."

Those who have had access to the periodical mentioned, will agree with me, I doubt not, that some of the best, perhaps the very *raciest* articles, were from the pen of Mr. Gordon. Among the first, was one already alluded to, as being the occasion of his being persecuted with vexatious suits at law, Religious Monitor, Vol. III. p. 14. "On Oaths."

The year in which I was installed in Putnam, (1828,) and the year following, there was a great deal of sickness, but we escaped. This brought me down to the age of forty. At this present time I am fifty; the trials of the intervening ten years, and the mercies too have had a peculiar complexion. The words of the psalmist explains the fact that I am here.

> Unless in thy most perfect law,
> My soul delights had found,
> I should have perished, when as
> My troubles did abound.—PSALM CXIX. 92.

"I must now state the mercies of particular times, and my exercise connected therewith.

"May 1st, 1829. I pleaded particularly for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in each of the duties of this holy Sabbath. I believe that I received a most sensible answer in explaining the psalm in the lecture and sermon, but especially in the application, making a free offer of Christ. Lect. Jer. iii. 12—19: and the sermon, Rev. xiv. 13. It was probably ordered, to keep me humble, that one of the elders told

me next day, that he did not well understand nor agree with me in one particular in the sermon on the clause, 'and their works do *follow* them,' which yet I think was made plain.

"Jan. 25, 1830. Another year has commenced, and it is a fit time to make mention of the loving-kindness of the Lord; inasmuch as the past year has been marked with sickness and death,—eleven children, and two adults by dysentery,—while we have all escaped and enjoy good health, together with the endearments of affection.

"For some time past, I have been led to plead the accomplishment of Deut xxxiii. 25: 'As thy days so shall thy strength be,' in preaching and other ministerial duties; and certainly it has been done sundry times to my wonder. When I have gone to the pulpit confused and trembling, I have obtained great freedom and comfort, not only in delivering what I had prepared; but truths that poured into my mind while speaking, bearing evidence of whence they came. No previous effort of mine could bring their equal in clearness and power. I confess, indeed, that I would be scarcely sat down, before vanity and pride would be for taking the credit. But had I at such times been left to bring forth nothing but the fruit of my own labour, alas! for the people and for me; it would have been a feast with empty dishes.

"I think those ministers who read their sermons commit great sin; they corrupt God's

ordinance, and turn it into another thing. They shut out the Holy Spirit, by their written paper, from speaking to the saints through *them*, and sustain a great loss to themselves. Immeasurably great is the consolation which an answer to prayer in circumstances like the above yields to the soul.

"If I should every Sabbath morning be left to sink in my own weakness almost to the point of ceasing in confusion, that I may be raised far above my best self; so be it to the last sermon I shall preach. 'Most gladly will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'

"James Wallace and my brother David, students in divinity, being with us, we have spent the Sabbath evenings in conversation on some spiritual subject, with other religious exercises, in which we have had many delightful views of the love of Christ. But O! the hardening influences of sin, for I may say that almost simultaneously I am conscious of a great barrenness in meditation, self-examination, and secret prayer: little life and much stupidity, a great deficiency of tender concern for the spiritual interests of my dear partner and children, and still more vigorous emotions from the vile untiring flesh; and I have no power to meet it. But I have been led for some time to make this my petition; 'Quicken me according to thy word;' that is, as I understand it, let me, or cause me by thy Spirit to experience, that *kind* and that *measure* of

quickening which thy word promises. On this I endeavour to hope that it will be so, and to wait.

"Feb. 22d. Yesterday I think I experienced an answer to the above in some degree, first, in family worship, and then in public, especially in making a free offer of Christ from Heb. vi. 17, 18. In the morning that word was my stay; 'Lo, I am with you;' and, in the afternoon, 'My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.' But weakness and fear of again falling into indifference is still great.

"In order to show how great a wonder it is that I am borne through, I would state that very frequently, on Sabbath mornings, my mind wanders beyond all the limits of other times. Ingenious ideas about worldly affairs, rise up with great force, and in multitudes, while my spirit seems as if palsied when it tries to take hold of the business of the day. Ere even I am aware, I am away from all the concerns of the Sabbath. Next comes a train of fears and apprehensions that I may be exceedingly lean in my discourses, or fail altogether. What but His marvellous and seasonable communications prevents it from being the case.

"Against this raging enemy of a wandering heart, I am but learning to fight. My weapon is prayer for a *fixed heart* under a strong sense of the excellence of divine things, with watching over my own thoughts. But it is like a

mortal's eye trying to follow all the subtle motions of a deceitful spirit. My hope for victory would be worse than folly if it rested on my diligence. But it will come from his word at the set time.

"On Sabbath evening I used to be full of matter for new discourses, and would frequently avail myself of it. But this great blessing I neither understood nor improved. Pleased with the fertility of my mind, I grew less diligent in study, and took more ease to myself. Now the case is greatly different; I come home exhausted in mind and body, the thoughts go to any thing rather than spiritual things. It is a burden to speak or even to think, and when I recover from this exhaustion, I am carnal, sold under sin: this is one of my present plagues. For remedy, I lay out before-hand something to occupy the time, reading, conversation and instructing the children, some of whom are now able to understand.

I have read Boston's Memoirs, wherein a view is also given of his contemporaries. I am ashamed of my great distance behind them in tenderness of conscience, zeal for God, love for souls, and especially of my own house, in family fasting, and personal covenanting. I am affected with the prevailing decline of the times, and my love is cold indeed.

Through me and such as I am, judgments are inflicted on backsliding churches. Alas! my sins are a leprosy in the walls and timber

of the house, that cannot be wholly cured, and the house must be taken down. My constitutional haste, and my irritable temper, what troubles have they caused, and what sin! I have made but little progress against them to this day.

"March 7th. This morning, I endeavoured to cast myself and work upon that running promise, 'Lo, I am with you;' and reasoned thus: This work of preaching is thy work: I am thy servant, and called to it by thee. I have no fitness for it, as thou knowest. Thou hast given this promise to thy servants, as enough to bear them up in thy work; I will therefore cast myself upon it, and abide the issue. By this course my mind was much relieved, and I desire to witness that in the forenoon lecture his presence *was* with me. It is a faithful promise.

"April 22. This day was observed as a fast in the family. My brother and James Wallace having in prospect to be licensed, and all of us to join in covenanting with the Associate Synod, in Philadelphia, and in the Lord's Supper—that we might seek of the Lord a right way, and be influenced by proper motives in the Presbytery and Synod; also, that we may be humbled for our sins and misimprovements. Providence favoured us with great quiet, and some comfort and enlargement in duty.

"October 24th. This day the Lord's Supper is to be dispensed—Rev. James Irvine to as-

sist. Never, in all my life before, was the giddiness in my head so great—never so much confusion of thought as now—so much filled with vexing fears—or mental energy so prostrate. I cried and said that he must help me, or I would sink—the work would come to a stand and this ordinance be dishonoured. I requested that he would cause me to feel the truth of his promise.

"O for a tongue to praise him for that day! He did answer me till my heart was full to overflowing, and far beyond what can be expressed by the words of mortals. There is *indeed* a blessed truth in his promise, and a blessed enjoyment in fellowship with him, even here. I most sensibly perceived it; it was no enthusiasm. As soon will this dark earth emit sunbeams, as the principles of fallen man yield to the soul what I felt. It was effected by the means of his own word. Heb. ii. 10, "For it became him, for whom are all things," &c.

At the table I took hold of his everlasting love, and gave up myself, my wife and my children to be his, wholly and evermore.

"Oh! what must heaven be where the soul is ever full of these holy influences of his Spirit!

"I am now ashamed of my unbelieving fears. On the Monday I had great freedom on Psalm xcix. 1: 'I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever.'

"March 10th, 1831. This evening I felt

much at reading the opinion of the Supreme Court, in the case of the poor oppressed Cherokees. My feelings rose to an intemperate warmth, for which a reproof soon came; the psalm which came in course to be sung that evening, was—

'Do thou from anger cease,
And wrath, see thou forsake also:
Fret not thyself in any wise
That evil thou shouldst do.'—Psalm xxxvii.

"I also observed, in the following verse, a striking application to the case that was before me, promising deliverance to the oppressed, and destruction to the oppressor.

'For those that evil doers are
Shall be cut off and fall,
But those that wait upon the Lord,
The earth inherit shall.'

"I will, therefore, wait patiently to see how the truth and right will come out; but I fear that the government is sinning away the life of the nation by its perfidy to these people.

"March 28th. I have been troubled to an uncommon degree with extraneous thoughts coming suddenly when studying or in religious duty, and, at the same time, the subject of study would suddenly drop out of mind. Sometimes, too, while I was speaking. This has caused me sometimes to go to the pulpit with terror, lest I should suddenly become dumb. Sabbath morning—and at family worship; especially in singing, it has been worst. . . . . I know not what to think

concerning it. I am in his hand who is even faithfully executing the new covenant, and will make good to come out of it. It may have natural causes, and Satan may have an agency in it; nevertheless, it may be a correction. I may have been vain of the power of close thinking, and not thankful. I have doubtless voluntarily allowed my thoughts to turn aside at improper times, and I have been often but lightly affected with the great subject of salvation. Perhaps it may be a restraining of his consolation from the hearers by way of reproof. Still, it is a mercy that he continues to be a reprover, and does not cease to strive. Indeed, I think this apathy and callousness as scarcely to have a thought good or bad, in duties secret, private and public, must be what is meant by 'causing bands on our loins to lie.'

"April 16th. Salem, on Saturday evening, I had great difficulty in calling up my thoughts, and great mental prostration and discouragement. But Psalm xlvi. 11, 'The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge,' came to my mind, as a suitable text; and it seemed, at the same time, suitable to myself. April 17th, Sabbath morning. Still perplexed and afraid I would not be able to carry through. Again, the same text came to my relief; and I endeavoured to reason my case before God thus: The cause for which I am to plead this day I am sure is good. It nearly concerns God's glory and the prosperi-

ty of Zion, namely, Heb. x. 23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.' I am called this day to serve thee. I have no strength or suitable frame for it within myself. Thou hast referred to this very passage for all that I need. This word cannot fail; if I can but cast myself upon it, neither will I fail. I will not listen to my unbelief or to Satan. I will go and proclaim this despised subject, and let Satan rage and backsliders reproach.

"Sabbath evening. I have been carried through with great liberty. Truly, 'He is faithful who hath promised,' as saith the text, and I have found it so. And I infer that He will not leave me in any labour or difficulty which I may have to endure for the profession's sake. This difficulty has already continued four years with some in the Presbytery who are friends to the union in Scotland, and to loose measures, especially in the matter of admission of people and ministers from that body, (United Secession,) and in matters of discipline; and it seems to be far off the end of it yet.

"April 18th. Awakened this morning just in time to prevent an insect going into my ear. The providence of God, in keeping us during sleep, when we may be so easily invaded by man or beast, is very wonderful.

"21st. Preached at Hebron, before Presbytery on occasion of a Presbyterial fast, from Jer. ix. 1—5, with freedom. In the evening

I went with Mr. Miller; he was thrown out of the wagon and severely stunned—and I narrowly escaped. Nothing but a merciful Providence saved our lives.

"24th. Preached at Salem with freedom, and in the afternoon, with great comfort, from 2 Cor. iv. 17, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"26th. Arrived safe at home, and found my dear family well. . . . . 'Henceforth thy going out and in God keep for ever will.'—Psalm cxxi.

"June 9, 1831. This was the most solemn occasion that ever was in this place. Forty-six members of the congregation, with their hands lifted up to the Most High God, did vow and swear to him, in the words of the Lord, appointed by Synod for renewing our covenant engagements. On the Sabbath following, the sacrament of the supper was dispensed.

"My fears were disappointed; I was afraid I would be in a cold, lifeless, indifferent frame—afraid there would be but very few willing to join, and that the work would probably meet with great opposition. But none of these things happened. I ascribe it to 'His grace that faileth never' that it was put into the hearts of so many to give themselves to the Lord. I have great inward satisfaction in thinking that I and my beloved wife have voluntarily and expressly given ourselves to

him, and we are his. There has been afforded all manner of outward countenance. Messrs. Campbell and Wallace were assisted in speaking very suitably. I considered it an advantage that I had to *pronounce,* audibly, the solemn engagement; it made a deep and solemn impression. If I am not greatly mistaken, my heart said *amen.* I preached on the Sabbath, on these words: 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that when he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich,' on which I had freedom and comfort. This was a time never to be forgotten, on account of the solemn vows and spiritual enjoyments of it.

"August 25th. We judged we were called as a family to fast, chiefly on account of the affliction of my beloved wife, and also on account of the small signs of grace among the children—the great and prevailing indifference to religion among the young—the low state of religion in general—and the abounding of error and wickedness, and also my own complicated affliction, giddiness, mental prostration, and low spirits; and there has not followed covenanting, that true reviving of heart-religion which ought to be.

"After endeavouring to be particular in confession and supplication, we endeavoured again to give up ourselves and family to God in Christ, and to take him as revealed in the new covenant to us, as all our salvation and all our desire.

"December 24th. The affliction of my partner still continues. Having fallen into great bodily weakness and nervous disorder after the birth of James—she is, in addition, left to be sorely tossed with temptations, and, particularly, in thinking that her neglecting to keep family worship one time when I was absent, is the *unpardonable* sin. This is a sore trial to us both. The subtlety with which the tempter endeavours to keep her mind under the most distressing fear, is wonderful. Yet his malice brings about good to us both, for never did we before have so many and interesting conversations on spiritual matters,—so many texts of scripture searched for help, and so many errands to the throne of grace. Sometimes, she would be, to appearance, wholly relieved by some argument or text; but presently, again, the fearful thought would be darted into her mind, and this would be added, 'that if that really was the unpardonable sin, it could not be altered, and all this apparent relief was but delusion.' Texts that spoke comfort did not belong to one in her case, she feared. At one time, however, she obtained relief some length of time from the words of the prophet: 'The bruised reed will he not break, the smoking flax will he not quench.' And at another time, still more from these words: 'The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.' Another means resorted to, which also had good effect, and afforded an argument

against the temptation, was, to draw up express confession of the sin she thought she had committed, and of self-devotement to Christ anew, and to sign her name to the same.

"December 24th, 1831. Distressed with doubts and fears about my state before God, and harassed with thoughts of my sins, which are many and aggravated, and especially my neglecting of family worship, and the sinful, disobedient, distrustful and rebellious thoughts of my heart on that occasion respecting it; deeply convinced that the seeds of every abomination are in my heart, and that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and that, for any thing good and spiritual, I have no strength, nor am I able to keep myself from sliding back and falling into distrust and despair. But, sincerely desirous to be delivered from all this sin and misery in God's way, and to be ashamed on account of it evermore, and to be sanctified, renewed, and strengthened, that I may be able both to enjoy and to praise God for ever. And, perceiving that thou, in thy sovereign providence, hast [given] thy word to me in the Bible, wherein thou art setting forth thy covenant of grace fully,—Thyself as a gracious, merciful, loving, sin-pardoning Father. Thy Son as a surety righteousness, an able, willing, and everlasting intercessor to save to the very uttermost all (even the chief of sinners of which I am one) that come to him. And his blood, as blood that cleanses from all sin,—and thy Holy Spirit

to dwell in the heart for ever, to apply to it all the benefits of Christ's death and intercession, and all the comforts of thy promises and everlasting love. Believing that this is all that my deplorable condition needs to make me both holy and happy, and fit for thy service,—and that thou hast warranted and invited me to accept of all this, saying, 'whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' I am heartily willing and desirous to have thee, Father, and Son, and Spirit, one God, as my God, according to the tenor of the said covenant of grace. I am willing to be saved by it both from sinning and suffering —and desire of thee to perform this great work of sovereign mercy upon me, a sinner. I desire to be supported through all the temptations and trials thou mayest send, and through this present trouble by thy grace and to thy glory. I desire to be enabled to take hold of all thy promises as made over to me in Christ, and, in the strength of them, to give myself unto thee in a life of new obedience, while here, pressing after holiness, and fighting against the corruptions of my own heart and Satan's temptations, and, at death, to resign myself into thy hand, to be with thee for ever in heaven. In testimony of my desire and sincerity in all this—I subscribe,

MARGARET GORDON.

"January 17, 1832. My dear companion appears to be relieved from her sore distress at this time. I most heartily join with her in

saying, 'It hath been very good for us that we were afflicted.' (And it was indeed a very sore affliction; her flesh has lost its fatness, she often forgot to eat her bread, trembling and fear and dread overwhelmed her.) Yet it was good. 1st. It answered several prayers by terrible things in righteousness. In the midst of it we were both distinctly answered, especially as to victory over sin and Satan. 2d. It has discovered to us our own weakness to an astonishing degree, even in commanding our own thoughts. So that one single thought so completely overmatched our strength that it stood between the soul and all the consolations of the word, like a wall of brass. We have seen our need of divine help to be absolute, even against the strength of a single thought.

3. We have obtained a deeper view of our own bottomless corruptions.

4. It gave me occasion to explain, and her to understand, a great many texts of the word, on the free offer of Christ, and God's love in him to sinners. In this I was most sensibly helped, even to amazement, in solving her doubts.

5. She had also intervals during this trying season, often very short, but delightful above the common degree; wherein God gave her of the wine of his consolations—tastes of his love, by which she was made to say—How good is it to be near to God!

"7th. We were taught the importance of

free and frequent conversation on spiritual concerns between husband and wife.

"8th. She has attained much in several of the graces, particularly tenderness of conscience.

"9th. We have *seen* how the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation—and that he will with the temptation make a way of escape; 'For the snare is broken, and we are escaped!' Lastly, I have obtained very clear evidence that she is God's own child, which renders her doubly dear to me in my calling. 'Ebenezer,' hitherto hath the Lord helped. 'The Lord shall fight for us, and we shall hold our peace.'

These severe trials in his own family by no means prevented his 'looking also on the things of others.' Indeed they seemed to render him more compassionate and tender in his regard for all his brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus. In a letter to a friend, with whom he kept up a close correspondence for the last twenty years of his life, from which correspondence several extracts will afterwards be given, he thus writes.

Sept. 23, 1832.

"I had a line from Mr. S. last week, in which he mentioned that Mrs. ——'s health is still in a precarious state. If I know my own heart, I deeply sympathize with her, and you, and the family, and in this Mrs. G. cordially joins.

"My prayer and hope is, that she may recover sound health, and be a blessing to all the connexion; but, more, that this application

may be abundantly sanctified; that the Son of God may walk with her in this furnace, and discover to her entire satisfaction excluding all doubt, and to her overflowing consolation and joy, that all that is His is hers. That this is the fact I have no doubt; and I know of no better thing on this side of Paradise to wish to her than that she herself should have none also. For then the soul is ready to rejoice and triumph in all circumstances and conditions through which it can possibly pass on its way to the Father's house above."

An extract may also be given from another letter, two months later, on the same subject, as it may be useful and comforting to others in affliction.

"You speak of my coming down this month. I would rejoice to do any thing that would comfort or encourage you or Mrs. —— in your present affliction. But this will be impracticable, as Mrs. G. is not well, and her situation more critical since the fall she got last month. I myself am also unfit to travel, having a breaking out over me, which I do not understand, as it is not like any thing I ever saw. But I can say in truth that I sympathize with you. Nor do I forget, when I go to the public Dispensary of the New Covenant to ask for a cordial, or healing medicine for you. And I have a strong confidence that this prolonged affliction of hers and yours will have a happy issue. I have still been led to ask for her life and health, and greater use-

fulness to the cause of Christ. Now though it would be unwise to set down any thing for certain, yet I have observed in other cases that when the Lord was not to grant a request, I was left to forget it very often, and sometimes almost to overlook it. While it is true we ought to ask such things in *submission* only, yet it is our privilege *to ask*, and I believe many a good thing and love-token we receive not, because we *ask not*. I will take the liberty of telling you an incident in my experience week before last. Several of us were affected with a severe cold: Andrew, the youngest but one, was taken more severely than the rest, pulse and respiration hurried, cough incessant with fever. We became alarmed, as I thought either his lungs were affected or it was the croup. In either case he was in great danger. We sent for a Doctor, and in the mean time used the most efficient means in our power. I endeavoured to lay myself and my child at the Lord's feet. I said I and my child were his, and he might do as he pleased; but, if it were his will, I desired his life, and that he would bless the means I was using, or lead me to the use of such as he would bless. These words came to my mind: 'Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him.' Acts xx. 18. When I came home he was evidently better, the doctor pursued the same course, and he is now quite well. Shall I not believe that this was an answer to prayer? I will set it to the account of this faithful promise. 'In the day of trouble see that thou call on me, I

will deliver thee.' In asking things in submission, I think this to be a safe rule, *to continue asking* until we either receive an answer or are by some word or providence forbidden to ask it any more. Moses continued to ask that he might be allowed to cross Jordan until God said, 'Let it suffice thee: speak no more to me of this matter.' Paul continued to beseech the Lord that he would remove the thorn in the flesh, until the Lord answered, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness.' In both these cases it is true the request was refused, yet their prayer was not in vain; for Moses, after having a sight of the earthly Canaan, was taken in a peculiar manner by God himself to the Canaan above. And never saint had such an honourable funeral, for the 'Lord buried him.' And Paul got what was *so much* better than the removal of this thorn, that he goes away exulting in these memorable words: 'Most *gladly* therefore will I rather *glory* in mine infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' When Peter was cast into prison by Herod, prayer was made *without ceasing* of the church unto God for him. And this was a thing they could only ask in submission. Now, my dear friends, follow the same rule, as perhaps you do. Let the heart, without cooling, and without wavering from the right end, namely, service in the cause of Christ, in the family and the church, desire her restoration to health.

And if the desired answer comes, how sweet to the taste of faith! You will then say God has heard *us* this time, he will be with us still in trouble to deliver us. He will hear us again. It would be an accession of delight and of spiritual strength to the heart above the powers of human language. And if you should not get this request, you will get something expressing God's eternal love through his Son Jesus that will more abundantly fill and satisfy your hearts, and cause you to say, 'Most gladly will I rather glory in this infirmity,' &c. We ought to believe that this affliction will contribute to the life of the soul. Now it would be no small contribution if we will learn this practical lesson, to know what God will do in marvellous condescension in answer to the prayers of his weak children. And if in addition it occasion us to search deeply into our ways—if it occasion much humility and brokenness of heart, and a strong sense of our need of sovereign mercy—if it teach us to wait patiently on God,—if it occasion us to discover the loathsomeness of sin, and the incomparable and ineffable beauty of the blessed Saviour, it will be good ground for saying, 'It hath been very good for me that I was afflicted.'—You should be earnest to discover with Job, 'wherefore He contends' with you. Might I venture to suggest, that your disappointment at my not coming down so often this season, is perhaps meant, in adorable Provi-

dence, to teach us to look more away from all creatures, and more to the eternal fountain of all consolation?"

At this time Mr. G. received from Mrs. Russel of Stamford, a manuscript of the memoirs of her relative Mrs. Campbell, of Torrich, in Scotland, said not to have been before printed. In a letter dated Sept. 1832, he says, "I have just finished, this week, Mrs. Campbell's Memoirs, and have been well repaid by the delightful themes which it has brought before my mind, and especially the unutterable ravishment the soul enjoys while it contemplates the eternal love of Father, Son and Holy Ghost terminating upon itself." He thus notices Mrs. Campbell in his memoirs. "She lived in the last persecution under Charles II., was a most godly exercised woman, affording a clear, full and practical testimony to the doctrines of the Reformation.

"I record this circumstance because it was a thing of the very kind I so much wanted, some time previous, while writing on that subject. And although too late for a place in those papers, yet it is now published by itself. I consider it a favour in holy Providence by which I am made acquainted with Mrs. C. and her large circle of religious acquaintances, and, to some extent, with the state of religion and affairs of the church at that time."

CHAPTER VII.

It is well known throughout the bounds of the Associate church, that for many years the Presbytery of Cambridge was afflicted by internal dissensions connected with matters of discipline. Mr. Gordon, who was always an active member and took a decided part, may sometimes have erred in expressing his sentiments with undue warmth, or in not bearing with sufficient patience the opposition of those he believed to be unreasonable or wicked men. Yet in looking over his letters written during this period, in very many of which allusions are made to the troubles in Presbytery, no word of bitterness or railing escapes him. I mean by this that though he called things by what he thought to be their right names, yet he never spoke of any with whom he could not agree, without grieving that it was so; and seemed more ready to ask why God had permitted these trials to come on the church and on himself, than to indulge in a railing or censorious spirit.

In a letter alluding to this subject he says, "I have been sometimes endeavouring to solve this question, Why is it that He who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will has seen good to lay it on me to have to do, and so long to do with such a man? I take it for granted that it was righteous, and that it has been in mercy and love. The infinitely wise love and mercy of God sees it to

be needful, oftentimes, to administer very bitter and powerful medicine, in order to effect a sound cure. Therefore, farther, I take it for granted that something wrong in me required that I should have just so much to do with such a man. I believe my natural temper, especially my impatience, needed it. I believe I needed it to be taught better to distinguish between *men* and *principles*. I have looked upon it also as a righteous correction for my own past latitudinarianism and coldness to the Secession cause. I have also taken it as a trial of my many professions and vows of steadfastness and love to my profession which I have made since, namely: whether I would stand to them or not. I also greatly needed it to force me into a more distinct acquaintance with church discipline and order. It was also needed to humble me. Lastly, it was needed to teach me to bring all matters to a throne of grace, and to bear on the arm of Christ to carry me along through every part of my ministerial duty. And perhaps it may be preparing me for something future."

On account of the difficulties in Presbytery, it had occurred to several of the members simultaneously to propose *fasts* to be observed. One in some central place for the whole Presbytery and one in each congregation. In a letter of July 18th this year (1832,) alluding to the proposed fast, he says:

"I am truly glad at such a coincidence of views among us. It may be this is yet a token for good. If I know my own heart, I desire

sincerely and truly nothing else than *the truth and the peace*, and in the matter have no desire to bring any thing personal into view, but only common ground which we may all well enough take.

"If I drew up the reasons [of a fast] it might prejudice —— against them, as you know he has expressed himself with great keenness against me in particular."—"In the reasons, I would not take up the blame or the merit attaching to any, but state as the main thing that the Head of the church has a controversy with us. This is manifest from the consideration that there is not a congregation in the Presbytery which has not been visited with trouble and distress of some kind, in some cases so as to threaten their existence. The ministry have been more or less connected with it all. This may be supposed an aggravation of the trouble. We and the people have been in danger of division. 'We have been a reproach to our neighbours round about.' Reproach has been brought upon the cause for which we appear.

"The edification of the church has suffered a great interruption; and unless the Lord in mercy put a stop to the evils that have caused all this, we cannot look for any thing but the most grievous disasters to follow till we be destroyed. These I consider sufficient reasons for a fast. And also for putting the inquiry, 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with

me?' Is pride at the bottom? Has there been a seeking our own things and our own pleasure, and a neglect of the things of Christ? Has there been a coldness and indifference to the profession,—a carelessness and distaste towards ordinances?—a pervading formality and hypocrisy in our fasts? Has there been a despising of preceding chastisements, and overlooking of his frequent rebukes? Such questions every one of us, ministers, elders, and people, ought to put home to our own consciences. Again, as we would consider peace, harmony, and cordiality a great mercy, ought we not with fasting and prayer to seek it earnestly, and especially, that the labours of the Commission, in order to this very end, may be blessed?

After the fast had been observed in his own congregation, he thus writes: "Yesterday we observed as a day of fasting and humiliation. I was so tired that I thought of nothing to-day but how to recruit myself for the work of Sabbath. When a fast is observed down in your bounds, one can help another; but I have to be alone at these times.

"I mean not to complain of my Master's service, for I must bear him witness that always when I had extra labour to perform, I had extra assistance granted me. 'As my day, so was my strength.' And to him all praise is due. My desire is constantly to go on in the strength of God the Lord, without complaining or

murmuring. Yet my weak and feeble flesh is frequently much exhausted, and my mind too seems as though the power of thinking and arranging thought had forsaken it for a time. We had a very full meeting. I do not remember ever to have had so strong a sense of any duty on my mind as I had respecting our fasting in Presbytery and congregation. If there has been a general melting of hearts into contrition and godly sorrow, it will be the precursor of good from our glorious Head, and I hope it has been so with many. But if the generality have only uttered before him 'good words' from a heart not sincere with him, our very fasting itself is yet greater cause of mourning than any thing before it, and we may justly fear that he will 'write bitter things against us,' and that sadder days await us, namely: A gospel preached without profit, and a people professing a form of sound words hardened—lifeless and cold, but full of the things of this present world, and full of evil affections one toward another. We would need to fast always or to be always in a fasting spirit. I am convinced both by the word and providence, that to have a frame comporting with our witnessing profession, and with the signs of the times, we ought to be 'clothed in sackcloth,' during the period of *our* ministry at least, and some generations of ministers after us. Write me very soon any thing you have to say. With much esteem,

A. GORDON.

After the presbyterial fast had been observed, he, in a letter written shortly after, thus alludes to it: "I was never more fully assured in my mind of the correctness of any measure, than I was of our presbyterial fast. It might have been a means of peace and harmony, for if hearts melt indeed they will easily run into one. But independent of that, and though it should produce nothing of that nature, it was right, and my heart rejoiced that it occurred simultaneously to so many of us. If —— did neither improve it nor regard it, it will not make us unaccepted in our deed before God, nor prevent his blessing coming down to us."

CHAPTER VIII.

On May 3d, 1832, Mr. Gordon had the happiness to see his brother David, over whose progress he had watched with a father's care, ordained to the office of the gospel ministry. Under this date he says, in his memoirs, "We have just returned from witnessing and taking part in the ordination of my brother in Salem congregation. An event that carries much of mercy and kindness in it to me. When I first talked of the matter to him, in 1811, then only in his seventh year, there was but little prospect of my attaining to that length, and much less of it in respect of him. Human

wisdom could not have foreseen it. Human means could not have effected it. I trust that in him the Lord will raise up an advocate for the covenanted reformation. The Lord has in his own way defeated some evil purposes to bar up his way to ordination and settlement there.

"But alas! that I should, under so many mercies, continue so long as I have been, in a stupid dead frame, and be so slow to put entire confidence in him. I trust the time will come when he will 'quicken me according to his word.'

"June 16th. I have just returned from Synod—safe—health improved—all well in my absence—Mrs. Gordon not destitute of comforts from former texts.

"In Synod—Reformation cause maintained in several decisions. In particular the one which decides, there is no reason for breaking fellowship with the original seceders in Scotland, who are under great reproach, contending for the truth:—token for good that the younger members of Synod appear to be drawing closer to the cause of truth. 'For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance, but judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it.'

June 30th. Saturday before the sacrament of the supper, being polluted with sin in my best thoughts, I come to thy blood to wash—weak for every spiritual act required of me, I

come to thy refreshing *table* for strength—with a heart hard and cold, I come for thee to shed down upon it the melting warming influence of thy Spirit. I come that the confusion of my thoughts may be cleared, and that I may see thy beauty and mine own vileness, that my heart may receive strength and farther establishment in thy grace. I will celebrate thy death as a satisfaction to Divine justice for my sins, and as the death of all sin *in me;* I will celebrate it as our triumph over Satan and the world. I will come that I may declare I am thine, bought with thy blood, that thy *death* is the meritorious ground of all the communion that shall be from this time and for ever between God and my soul in grace and glory. I take it as a sure pledge that my Lord shall come the second time, and that I shall be caught up in the air to meet him.

"July 1st. Sabbath. Preached from Hosea ii. 19, 20, where I had great liberty and satisfaction in setting the marriage contract proposed by Christ before the people, and in pressing them to consent to be his. And I also did on that solemn occasion at the table, and in the family [worship] expressly consent to be Christ's, as did also my beloved companion, and to take him to be our Head, according to the tenor of the contract." Here follows a form of covenanting signed by Mrs. Gordon.

"The Lord said to me this day, being the

day of the celebration of the Lord's supper, in the action sermon, 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and loving-kindness and mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord' [Hosea ii. 19, 20.] To this contract, in which he engages to do all, and to take me as I am, absolutely worthless and vile, and clothe me with his righteousness and beautify me with his holiness, and write his law in my heart, and bring me to a familiar and endearing knowledge of him, and nearness to him, I did at the table consent, I do here consent, and subscribe myself *his* from henceforth even for ever; and do call him *Ishi*, my husband.

This 3d day of July, 1832. In the presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the holy angels. MARGARET GORDON."

July 15th, Sabbath morning: While seeking to have assistance in his own work, that promise fell on my mind, which has so often done so: 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' &c. I said this promises only a sufficiency—I want abundance. Then that word came with great power, 'Lo, *I* am with you.' In this I saw Christ and all his fulness was given to me, and I had great courage that day and two Sabbaths since.

Aug. 12. I had this day to rebuke a woman for ante-nuptial fornication. The thought of

having to do this, and my discourses, were agitating my mind not a little, when the following words of the psalm fell with commanding power upon me:—'Be still, and know that I am God.' I saw that this was both my duty and present relief:—To be still and not vex my mind unnecessarily before the time came, even about duties. This was to distrust and look away from Him, since *he* who is all-sufficient has promised to be with me *always*, even unto the end. I saw that I was called to take every step with my eye on him as my help, which is enough to still the tumult of the soul.

"Immediately on this my mind took an opposite turn, and began to rove abroad, when the latter part of the words came again, '*know that I am God*,'—which I viewed as a reproof from him who knows the thoughts, and whom I was professing to serve with the heart.

"Oct. 14th, was a day of high communion with God in Christ, a day to which I had been looking for refreshment to myself, my companion, and the congregation; and it came. O what a heaven it would be to preach under a full gale of the Spirit, the sovereign, infinite, eternal and unchangeable love of the Father in sending his Son into our world, in circumstances so humiliating, to perform such a glorious work of redemption from sin, and all this in order that vile sinners might be brought first into his lower house, and then into his presence above. O my soul, never forget that thou didst then say unto the Lord—*Thou art*

my God. O what joy! what delight! It is most certain that he hears prayer and performs his own promise. I know it is good to draw near to God. I know that I felt to-day in my soul what is in its nature calculated to make me perfectly happy, and in due time *it will.*"

I have observed that on such occasions Satan generally stirs up trouble, in order to prevent or mar edification—and there was trouble; but God overruled it, and, as it were, quenched the fire, and kept it from spreading.

Ten persons were admitted to the communion, a greater number than at any time before.

"Oct. 17th. This day I was to go out to visit: one of the elders came with his horse to take me in my wagon. We had gone but a little way when the horse stopped on the brow of the hill (the collar being too narrow for him) backed rapidly—upset—and broke several things: we were both thrown out upon the road, yet unhurt. How great a deliverance was this! It would have been no marvel, under the circumstances, if we had both been killed. To his mercy the praise is due. After some time we proceeded, but the people were not at home; and I felt unwell, and unable to proceed. Now it came to my mind that I had not been particular in the morning in asking for divine direction.

"Jan. 1st, 1833. In answer to prayer, God has dealt very mercifully with us. Three days ago my seventh child was born. I may here record, that great mercy has been manifested

at the birth of all the children. But Mrs. G. gets no strength, and hardly any sleep. At this time I am labouring under erysipelas, which is very afflicting—yet I can see mercy mixed with judgment; for my health otherwise is good—mind more vigorous—my arms so that I can write—have been able, except one day, to preach. When my legs became so swollen that I could not stand, I sat, which I could not do before. It has chastened my spirit, and led me to views of sin as exceedingly tenacious and difficult to remove, and led me to reflect on death with some profit. It says to me, 'Be diligent in your work, while it is day.' I consider it from God that the people show a solicitude about my health." In a letter of this date, after describing the symptoms, he says:

"I am sometimes not far from discouragement, but again I am assured I am in a friend's hand whose mercies never fail, and I desire to wait patiently on his holy will—I need to take the advice which I have often given to others, and hope I shall not be left to prove to them, by my impatience and unbelief, that it was all outside work with me. Nevertheless I need your prayers and counsel."

Under date of Feb. 25th, he says in his memoirs—"This evening smoke was discovered to issue from a worm-hole in the kitchen floor, and upon tracing it to its source we found the sill was on fire: had it not been for this timely discovery, the whole premises would

have taken fire in the night. This is the third time since I came to the U. States that fire has been detected in time, and always at night—'Behold he that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.'

"April 26th. My dear wife has for three weeks past been visited with a return of her fear that it *was* the unpardonable sin. At the same time she does not regain strength, but grows weaker under any means that are used. The vexing suggestions or temptations are somewhat varied from what they were before, but more sudden and violent, and especially in forcible presentments of texts of scripture in an inverted view."

CHAPTER IX.

The next event noticed in the "memoirs," was the most painful and distressing of any that ever befell him in his weary pilgrimage. Mrs. Gordon's feeble health has been alluded to. She was, perhaps, naturally disposed to melancholy, which tendency had been greatly increased by her present debilitated state of body. Being anxious to try change of scene, she was induced to wean her babe, then about five months old, intending to bring her to the meeting of the Presbytery at Hebron, and the visit to Saratoga. She did not, however, improve sufficiently to enable her to accompany her husband, but at the time of Mr. Gor-

don's departure she gave no evidence that was noticed of any aberration of mind. He says:

"Presbytery was to meet in Hebron, and I was to assist at the sacrament there. I felt some doubt about leaving home, and would not, but she seemed for some days previously to be better, and consented I should go.

"But alas! the day after my departure her trouble of mind returned, and her fear of that awful sin, till as she afterwards expressed, her distress could not come to a greater height. While at family worship in this condition, happening to read the 5th chapter of Matthew, where it is said, 'If thy right hand offend thee,' &c., she took the idea that this was her duty, and that if she would perform it, she might get relief—went out as soon as worship was over, and literally complied.

"An elder brought me the sad intelligence on Sabbath morning at Hebron, and instead of serving the Lord's table I had a sorrowful and silent travel home. This was a very severe stroke. It was from the God of the covenant, *and my God in Christ.* It becomes me, a poor worm, to prostrate myself in the dust before him, who moves in a most mysterious way —and to be still. His mighty hand hath touched me. O that I may be suitably humbled, and enabled patiently to bear, in faith, all that he sends! O that I may be led to right exercises under it!

"I found, upon the same day that this took place, I was preaching in Hebron with much

freedom, on the *peculiarity* of the afflictions of God's people, and insisting that they were to be regarded as marks which the sovereign love of God put upon his people individually. In this light I have endeavoured to view this sore affliction to us both, *a mark of his sovereign love.* In thinking how and what I would preach, on the first Sabbath, the words of the prophet, Micah vii. 9, were suggested as fit: 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, till he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me.' (I cannot say that I understand all this trial, even at this distance, 1839:) some things were to be plainly seen in it. For example, I had particularly besought the Lord in her behalf before, and after going away. Trial,—will I believe that this event will be no contradiction to a gracious answer? I had particularly committed all my concerns to him on the 121st Psalm—Trial,—will I still trust them to him, and go on in the service of his cause.'

Having promised, when leaving Hebron, to write to the brother who was to assist immediately on his arrival, he sent the following:

April 29th, 1833.

My Dear Friends,—I promised to write to you, but know not what to say, or how to put this sore dispensation into words—I arrived here last evening about 9 o'clock. I have not seen any thing to alter my opinion of the case of my dearest. I firmly believe her to be in

the bonds of God's holy covenant—a child of his 'walking in darkness and having no light.' Three things are the instrumental causes of her present deep distress and mine, hysterical affection, the workings of remaining unbelief, and the temptations of Satan. While we have to contend against these fearful enemies, permitted by our God to scourge us, because we have broken his laws, and gone astray—we have at the same time to be the subject of very cruel and unfounded suspicions as to the state of mind of my dearest, and her design. But I must be brief on this very painful case. The hand of God lies heavy upon us. O may his Spirit be powerful and sweet within us. The fever seems to be subdued and the arm doing well. She seems comparatively composed and tranquil. I am confident the power of the 'roaring lion' is in all this. O that God would either command him at a distance, or give us more power to resist.

Your affectionate brother and sister in much love in the Lord,

A. GORDON."

Mr. Gordon's exercises of mind seemed like that of the Psalmist—"I was dumb, and opened not my mouth—because thou didst it." He was somewhat like Job in the number and severity of his unparalleled afflictions. Like him, too, he "was not in safety, neither had he rest, neither was he quiet, yet trouble came." In six days after this sore trial, the

house in which he lived, together with nearly all his worldly property, was consumed by fire. He thus records it:

"May 3d.

"Before I had yet done contemplating and recording the preceding event, the holy providence of God has sent me another. Yesterday our house, and nearly every thing in it, was burnt to the ground at 2 o'clock in the morning. 'It was of the Lord's mercies that we were not consumed,' either by temptations or the fire, or both together. Had we slept ten minutes longer (and why we awoke at that time I know not) in all probability four of the children must have been consumed. Therefore I will sing of mercy as well as of judgment. A great sympathy is manifested, especially by distant brethren and congregations, and prompt and efficient aid sent us in money and all things we needed. It was the same almighty hand that moved their hearts to it that had touched me. It was remarkable that the day before the burning I was led to fix on Psalm lxvi. 12, for the afternoon: 'Though we passed through fire and water, thou broughtest us to a wealthy place.' I must avail myself of this place to state, in confutation of a very uncharitable and groundless suspicion circulated against my afflicted partner—that it is within my certain knowledge, that the fire proceeded from ashes having fire among them,

which I myself carried out and forgot to quench."

The following letter, written shortly after, will show the state of his mind at this time.

"May 20th, 1833.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—This day I received yours of the 15th inst. It is consolation throughout to us both. Allow my heart to say, 'I was naked, and ye clothed me.' This I record now in the firm belief that it will be pronounced to you by Christ at the day of judgment. I have scarcely yet taken my thoughts five minutes at a time off the solemn lesson which my God has set before me. The first two sabbaths after it I found that I could study none at all, unless I could find a text that bore directly on the case, and that set my duty before me. And I write now only because I know you will bear with me writing about that alone—To speak my feelings is impossible. But I will mention some of the texts that have been brought to my mind as suitable to direct our exercises on the occasion.

"The first that occurred was, Micah vii. 9: 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord,' &c. I tried to preach on this on forenoon of sabbath first. Psalm lxvi. 12: 'Though we passed through fire and through water, yet thou broughtest us to a wealthy place.' I had chosen this the day before the house was burnt. On the morning when the house was burning, and

before any body had yet come, while running about in the grave-yard naked, and scarcely in the right use of my reason, because under some apprehension that all the children had not been got out, the words of Job came forcibly on my mind: 'Naked came I from my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither—the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord:' and I felt much better by it. Yet still it recurred to me that my God was angry, and pleading a controversy with me and mine. Then I reflected on my frame of heart in prayer—in conversation—or the manner in which I had been exercising my ministry, and pleaded guilty. Yet I could not see that I could follow a different course respecting the public cause, either in Presbytery or any where else. And still the dispensation seemed dark. Some time during the day these words came to my mind: 'Be still and know that I am God.' 'And Aaron held his peace.' I felt in some measure able to acquiesce, and have henceforth endeavoured to hold my peace, because it was God that did it; and I think I have felt comfort in doing so. The next word that came was, 'What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter.' This word has come very often, and I infer that we shall all in God's time see more clearly into these sad events. In the mean time, it occurred to me as the most important thing at present, to attend to *how* to carry myself straight through this trial, so as to give before the people a

proper testimony to the reality of vital religion, and keep from stumbling myself into any snare or wrong behaviour.

"Satan has not been idle all this time within me. His first assault, which was begun before I left you, and continued at intervals, was, 'what signifies *now* all your petitions for Mrs. G. and family, and your leaving them on God in your absence? Has God regarded them, or is there any thing in it at all? I said, yes. If God had not heard and regarded, and set a bound to thee, it would have been her life instead of her hand; but it is only her hand, and that only the left. 'Therefore I will look unto the Lord, I will *wait* for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.' And in due time those very petitions for a return of spiritual consolation to her will be heard. I trust that such good will come out of even these sad calamities to us both, as will cause us to sing, 'It hath been very good for me that I was afflicted,' &c. Another temptation—'But you have sung and prayed this word—'Thou shalt not need to be afraid for terrors of the night.' What has become of that, seeing that your house was burned in the night? Ans. If that faithful promise had not awakened us from sleep at 2 o'clock in the morning, we would all have been consumed in the flames. We have lost nothing that we can take with us to heaven. Therefore I see it is [owing] to this very promise that we are all saved. Another: What will those against whom you have been contending say—What

speculations and conjectures will there be as to the state of Mrs. G.'s mind? How will people gaze, &c. This may be our trial, but not our sin. These are a specimen of his temptations.

"There is one thing that has perplexed me and others; namely: What is the character of Mrs. G.'s act? Some have taken the idea that it was altogether a great sin; and I was partly led into this. But on after and more mature consideration, I find a difficulty in the way of saying so. It would no doubt have been so if she had been in a sound state of mind and body; but neither was so. I know certainly that great nervous debility had greatly disordered the imagination at times that same week. How far to view it as sinful in her, and how far it was her affliction, I do not know. I have said little to her on this one point, for fear I should 'wound her whom God had smitten.' But it would be well if some correct views of the act could be given to the people, whom I certainly do not blame for being greatly astonished and alarmed. But it is a task to which I am not equal.

"Our sacrament is settled for the fourth sabbath of June, and I feel so feeble and unfit for much study or speaking that I would like much to have two to assist at this time. I have invited David, and I would much desire you; we have all very much need of your countenance and encouragement. Although we have no house of our own, we will in all probability have one by that time; and it would be very de-

sirable to have you and Mrs. M—— likewise. Mrs. G.'s arm is nearly healed; her health improves, and she has some returns of comfort.

"I had a letter from brother C—— at the same time with yours: he had also heard of the first sad event, but not of the second. I have not written to any body yet, except you and brother David, and it will be some time before I *can* do it. It so opens up the wounds afresh, that I am not able to stand it. And I do not know that much writing would comport with the state of mind in which people will expect me to be, and in which I ought to be. But if you would undertake this for me, and let such brethren know as would have some claim on me to be informed, and Mr. C—— among the rest, I would esteem it as from my friend and brother. With much love to you, we remain your afflicted brother and sister.

A. GORDON.

"N.B. I should have mentioned another temptation with which I am frequently beset.—When the merciful Lord is turning the hearts of many of his people to sympathize with me, and to pour in consolation, this thought comes often with sudden force—'Now you are a tried and experienced Christian. There are few that have come your length.' Thus, you see he tries me on both extremes. But I am in God's hand. Yesterday, May 20th, I received a letter from B——e enclosing a very large present indeed. I blush and am ashamed to think that

so great attention and kindness should be paid by God and his people to a poor worm of the earth. A. G.

From the "Memoirs," and from letters written at this time and for several months, it would appear that heavy trials were still sent, which he endeavoured to improve.

Under date of May 17th, he says, "It is a weighty concern to carry straight under this sore trial, which is continuing and increasing *to me* through the astonishing want of consideration, misapprehension, and cruel jealousies, that meet me in the face every where. It is extremely difficult, as I *alone* must meet it. Whatever I say or propose is most unaccountably misunderstood or distrusted. I proposed to our session to delay the dispensation of the supper at this time, and to hold a fast and entreat the Lord that we might be brought to one mind. Also, that the advice of brethren in the ministry might be sought: both of which was done, but without effect.

It was almost impossible to obtain any hired help in the house at this time. So I was obliged to be nurse by night and day, David being only six months old. This child pulled over the coffee pot, and scalded himself; and John, the oldest, got his arm broken. But there were two things which contributed chiefly to support me through all this. First, that I was enabled every Sabbath to preach, and

secondly, my mind was led through the whole summer to texts that seemed apposite both to comfort and to direct to proper exercise.

The text being found, my own case brought the subject before my mind, and thus I was enabled to discourse in circumstances which otherwise would seem to have made it impossible to preach at all."

CHAPTER X.

None of the trials he met at this time, pained him so much as the view that was taken of Mrs. Gordon's melancholy act, committed during mental derangement. It is thought there can be no impropriety in publishing a few extracts from letters written during the summer of 1833. It is hoped and believed no one's feelings can now be injured by them. Mr. Gordon himself frequently expressed a strong desire that the case of his deceased wife might be fairly set before the Christian public, who had heard of it. This I shall endeavour to do as faithfully and judiciously as I can.

"June 3d, 1833. My dear brother, I received yours of May 27th, from which I perceive you had not received mine, posted previously. I stated one thing that is likely to cause perplexity and trouble, and I was very desirous of your presence and judgment, and

in what light to view Mrs. Gordon's act, and her present case? To-day the session met, and among other things this was noticed. I am placed in a most painful situation. My mind was asked, and I tried to give it honestly and uprightly as far as I could; but it does not seem to be the mind of the session. They are of the opinion, she cannot be allowed to come forward at this time. I have no doubt but they are really honest, and are acting according to the best of their judgment. But to tell her, if she is disposed to come forward, to stay back, is a task I am not equal to, and so far as I know my own conscience, feeling and affection, have not sufficient light to see that it is a duty to do so. My dear friend, I am in a strait, and what shall I say? It is His will that I should so be—my soul is really troubled. I feel as though my nature would give way, yet I try to hope, and look for the day to break. The session expressed a desire to take advice, and you were spoken of in particular. If you could come any time, I would get them together, and hear your mind. I will endeavour to cast myself on His mercy and submit my judgment of the case. I only add, that I do not wish my feelings, which I cannot avoid expressing, to have any undue weight on your mind. We are now in a small house by ourselves, about three-fourths of a mile from the meeting-house. Pray that my faith fail not, and that the Lord may make this darkness light.

A. GORDON."

In a letter dated June 10th, he says, "I consider Mrs. Gordon considerably better; the arm is healed. Her strength somewhat increased, and, so far as able, she again takes part in the affairs of the house. The thought of what has been done gives her at times trouble, and I am not without fear at times that she may be tried on that account. Indeed, it has already frequently been a matter of doubt with her, whether ever a child of God was left to do such a thing. Yesterday I had for my text, Psalm xxxiv. 19: 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.' But it was the next verse that caught *her* eye, namely, 'He keepeth all his *bones*, not one of *them is broken*.' After we came home, she asked me to explain it. After I had done so, I asked her, if that text did not come to her notice, accompanied with a suggestion that she was *not* one of the righteous? She said it did.

August 6th, 1833.

My dear Brother,—

I received your letter this evening. I acknowledge I should have written to you. But I am so pressed by one trouble after another, that I scarce know what I am doing, or what I should do. The list is so long, I am afraid to begin it. Soon after you were gone John came home with a swelling in his knee, which the doctor thought might make him a cripple for life. However, by blistering, he was able to

go to work in two weeks. But before he was away, his brother came home with his feet swelled almost to bursting with poison. Before he was better, our girl took sick, and went home, and I could not get another. By night and day I have had to be a nurse myself. At length I got one of my brother-in-law's little girls, who does as much as she can. But again John came home last Saturday night with his right arm broken at the wrist; and on the same day, James, the youngest but one, was seized with croup; it became alarming to-day, so that I could no longer trust my own skill, and sent for the doctor. I am now sitting up watching him, while the rest are asleep.

Yesterday the session met, when I had the fresh pain of finding that their difficulty remains in all its force; and they stick at a point where it seems impossible even to help them; namely, they are convinced that the act was done in the due use of reason, which I *know* was not the case, neither do I think it possible under the circumstances. Here hangs a dark cloud, which I pray God, in mercy to them and to me, to dispel. But I must stop. I am still the child of many mercies. I never saw more vividly in my life, or felt more comfortably the security of the man's house that is built on the *Rock Christ crucified.* I am now [lecturing] in the 3d chapter of Galatians; and last Sabbath I had a most delightful text, Isa. xxvi. 4: 'Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.'

I am sure we both deeply sympathize in your affliction. May it be of short continuance, and work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I trust I shall not be led to forget her case until an answer comes.

If my poor wife had access to such a neighbour, how exhilarating it might be! But why should I begin to pine or desire what Providence has refused? Her mind is now more vigorous than when you were here, but the body very feeble; and what the issue may be is known only to our Father in heaven. Her lungs are considerably affected by sympathy. O that I could entirely rest with all my cares in His sovereign hand. I know he is wise, and cannot be mistaken—very pitiful, and will not afflict or grieve me willingly. I know he never fails. Still I am flesh as well as spirit, and I assure you that some of the past weeks the conflict has been terrible. These words of Job have frequently come into my mind: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' and its coming to me under such circumstances bears the mark of the *Master's* hand. Under this conviction I have endeavoured to join with it, and say amen. I will adhere to this cause and this ministry, this hope of salvation, come of me what will.

"I have bought the house in which I live, (for which some blame me,)—have engaged a workman to make a study and two small bedrooms. I had a letter from W—— S——: he has bought $55 21 worth of excellent books

—Mr. Beveridge has bought $32 worth of excellent and cheap books. He received from Argyle $50; of Mr. J. M. $10; of the congregation of Philadelphia, $55 56.

"If Satan meant to make me poor, he missed it. It would really seem as if there was to be a resemblance to Job's case in that point too. I remain yours, A. GORDON.

August 20, 1833.

"I am in my turn anxious to hear from you, and how it fares with ——; whether the disease is subdued or not. I am in doubts about attending Presbytery. I have no one who can take care of the child at night, and I consider Mrs. G.'s health no better, but worse. It seems to me that as her mind regains its vigour, her body loses strength. So far as I can judge, all the means the Doctor has used have missed the mark. If help do not soon come, I fear it will be too late. I have even now very gloomy apprehensions. The Lord is afflicting me in truth and righteousness—may it make me fitter for glory. I have a great desire she should have the benefit of Dr. M——'s skill—and if she be able to endure the fatigue, we will try and come down, if I can get any one to take care of the child. I earnestly hope Mrs. —— has got better. I can again say that I have not been left to forget her case. Dear brother, we are perhaps both at this time put to our covenant engagements, and called on to put in his hand a blank to be

by him sovereignly filled up with the issue of our own and of our partners' cases. The Lord give you and me strength to walk loose in this furnace with the Son of God. No doubt the eyes both of friends and enemies are upon us in our present case. May we be enabled to show to both of them, that our public testimony to the cause is an affair of the *heart*, and our souls have wedded for *eternity*, and all the changes intervening. Death cannot be a great way off, when all these trials and sorrows will come to an *end*, and then it will be sweet (not meritorious) to look back on any thing we may have done or suffered for his truth.

"I had a long letter from —— lately, in which it appears to me, he also has taken a wrong view of Mrs. G.'s case. Truly the resemblance which many of my sympathizing friends have observed between my troubles and Job's is very striking; and this is one point among the rest, and not the least painful to me, that our friends misunderstand our case and construe it with great severity. I am sure I have exercised the utmost of my judgment in order to come at the true view of it, and I pray that if I have taken a wrong view, I may be led to discover it.

"I freely concede that the church has a right to know what her state of mind *is*, and what she thinks of that painful act. I have repeatedly told all I know, and suggested that they ought to come and converse for themselves.

I have also agreed to be ruled by what advice Presbytery may give.

The thing that seems the most surprising to me is, that they cannot at all admit that there was any disorder *in the mind* at the time of the act; for I feel it utterly impossible to conceive that it could have been done *without* it, even if I had known no more about her case than other people.

"But, alas! my heavy fear is she may not be long here. Imagine yourself in my case, and, then pray for me.

Your afflicted brother,

A. GORDON."

The following extract from the "Memoirs" will show some of the exercises of his mind at this time.

"I am clear that humility, submission, faith and patience are proper exercises now and henceforth, and to believe that if *all things* will, surely so weighty things as these shall work together for our good. There are many things dark and truly astonishing at present. The help I have for this is to 'wait for God,' and believe that what I know not now, I shall know hereafter.

"Doubtless we have had too much pride. Too much hardness of heart and coldness to spiritual life and duty. Too much care about the conveniences of this life. Fleshly lusts not sufficiently mortified and subdued. My life and heart have not been equal to my writings and preachings. My zeal for souls has been

very little. Though I have been contending in our church courts for a good cause, and have nothing to challenge in it, yet often with an improper frame. Considering my means and opportunities, vows and profession, my whole life has fallen far below them. I find a great tendency to go to one extreme or other,—to despise or to faint.

For these reasons I may be chastened. O that my heart may be kept from hardening and my feet from falling! O that He himself would show me, a sinner, his way, and clearly teach it to me! O that my earnest prayer and cry may come before him, for *deliverance, comfort and establishment* to my wife!

"I find the case of my poor wife is greatly misunderstood in the congregation, and the most severe and painful construction put on it by some. This causes me the most exquisite pain. May the Lord keep me from speaking in reference to it, and especially in public. O that Satan may be defeated, and that the Lord would open the eyes of this people."

Mr. Gordon next records some conversations held between himself and his wife in reference to her trouble of mind. This recorded conversation may possibly be of use to others whose minds are harassed with the same or similar distressing fears; and the success that attended his endeavours to administer consolation to Mrs. Gordon, may encourage ministers and others to make like efforts in these distressing and sometimes apparently hopeless cases. It

also seems to have been his wish to have it made public, as he closes it in these words: "I have set down the above, because there are sundry things in them which may serve to refute the cruel calumnies that were circulated when I, as well as she, shall be beyond being affected either by the censure or applause of mortals."

"I said,—I have no doubt but that God's people have been left as far as you.—Ans. Do you really think so?

"If I did not believe that you are a child of God, my trouble would be much greater than it is.—Ans. Am I a child of God, his own child?

"Yes, *I* have no doubt of it.—Ans. But how do you know?—what do you see that makes you think so?

"I know by the same sort of evidence that the apostles knew respecting those to whom they wrote. (This seemed to give her great comfort for a short time.")

At another time,—

"Do any comfortable texts of Scripture come to your mind?—Ans. Sometimes, but I can take no hold of them.

"There is one, 'The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.' Do you never feel any comfort?—Ans. Sometimes I do for a little while, but I soon fall back where *I* was again.

"Is it still the same fear that you have committed the unpardonable sin that troubles you? — Ans. Yes.

"Do you have any trouble on account of what you have done?—Ans. Yes, I am troubled about it, and regret that it has been done; it has added to my guilt. I was in so great trouble at the time, I thought it could not be greater. I thought it was my duty to do it, and that I might get relief by it.

"Did the thought of it come suddenly into your mind?—Ans. Yes, at the time I was just left to do it."

At another time.

"Why are you so averse to conversation? May not this be a device of Satan to keep you from getting comfort?—Ans. Does not the Psalmist say, 'My trouble is so great that I am unable to speak.'

"Is that your case?—Ans. Yes.

"Why do you not try to communicate your mind to me, as you used to do?—Ans. If I would tell you what I feel sometimes, you would not believe me.

"Do you not think that weakness and disease of the body may be the cause, or at least the occasion of your trouble?—Ans. Sometimes I think so.

"Do you not hesitate sometimes in time of worship?—Ans. Yes, I sometimes think I should not attempt it.

"Why do you think so?—Ans. I think it a great sin in me, and will not be accepted.

"Why do you think so?—Ans. I have told you long ago.

"Is it still the fear of that sin?—Ans. Yes.

"Do you hate Christ and the Bible?—Ans. No, I cannot say that I do.

"Have you any desire to be a real Christian and to belong to Christ?—Ans. Yes.

"How then is it possible that you have committed that sin?—Ans. Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous, yet he was a wicked man?

"Do you ever pray for the forgiveness of sin?—Ans. I try to do it.

"Have you ever brought this thing that has been done before the throne of grace?—Ans. I try to do it.

"Is your trouble about that sin as great and violent as it was?—Ans. I think not.

"Had you any comfort from the text this afternoon?—Ans. I do not know that I had.

"Is not Christ able and willing to be as good as his word?—Ans. Yes.

"Has he not by God's authority offered to you, and you warranted to take all this comfort to yourself?—Ans. Yes.

"Why then are you not comforted?—Ans. Because faith is the gift of God.

"If the sacrament had been dispensed, do you think you would have gone forward?—Ans. I think I would have hesitated.

"What would have prevented you?—Ans. Just the same thing—the fear of that sin.

"Was not the sin of the Prophet Jonah, when he fled to Tarshish, like the sin which you think was in you the unpardonable sin?—Ans. I think there was some difference.

"Did not he know as clearly and perfectly that it was his duty to go and preach to the Ninevites, as you did that it was your duty to keep family worship?—Ans. Yes, I suppose he did.

"Did he not as wilfully and obstinately refuse to do it too?—Ans. I do not know.

"You surely know that he fled from the presence of the Lord, and out of the visible church, to go among heathen, rather than do that duty; and can you point out any thing in which your sin differs from his to the worse? —Ans. No.

"But his sin was not the unpardonable sin, how then can yours be?

"At this point the snare broke, and she escaped from that awful fear, and was never more troubled, and her mind seemed to rise as if a load had been taken off."

The following letter, dated October 18, 1833, shows the happy effect his afflictions had had in fitting him for administering true comfort to others in affliction.

"The precarious state of Mrs. ——'s health is a good reason for your not coming. I desire to sympathize with you and her, and the family. It is a trial to faith, patience and hope; or, rather, it is a number of them together.

"After a sore trouble in the public business of the church in the way of endeavouring to be faithful, you received a stroke on property. Mrs. ——'s affliction is another and a heavier one. The indisposition of the children is an

addition. And the letter which it seems —— sent you may also be viewed in that light 'Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and SCOURGES every son whom he receives.'

No doubt there is a cause—but it is *not* because of any faithful contendings. But it may be to prove and try whether we have learned *practically* to stand by the truths of our profession in our hearts in the way of resting with firm confidence and hope upon them, when the course of divine Providence seems to be in our face, as well as when men oppose us. Now if we could only, when the deep waters of affliction come round about us, and even into our very soul, still feel our feet to be standing on the truth, and that while on it we are in no danger of sinking, we are on the *eternal Rock*, it will discover to us a value to be in the truth to which the things of this world can have no proportion. It will give us some insight into the matter of 'dying in faith.' It will make us take deeper root and stand more firm amidst the storms that assail the truth from without, and withal give us a knowledge of it, which through God's blessing may be more useful to his people. We have with uplifted hands said to *Him*, 'we are thine own property, our children, our dearest and nearest all are thine,' and now that he is laying his hand on these, what shall we say,—Thy will is my will—Thy will be done. But I know it is no easy thing to lay ourselves at the feet of *sovereignty*, and say, 'Fulfil to me the promise, and dispose of

me as thou wilt.' Nevertheless, if we can attain to this, it will bring forth a blessed harvest of peaceable fruits. Who can put into the words of mortal man what the soul feels when it sings,

> My heart and flesh do faint and fail,
> But God doth fail me NEVER!

My prayer, I trust, shall not cease, in the way of submission, for Mrs. ——'s recovery, as a life that seems to me useful, but still more that a sense of sovereign, electing, calling, sanctifying and redeeming love may fill and satisfy her heart, and cause spiritual joy and triumph, and that when she comes out of this furnace the gold may be more pure.

We desire with much sympathy to be remembered. A. GORDON."

His letters to his friend in A——, written in Nov. and Dec. of this year, contain a very full and particular account of his soul-exercises, under Mrs. G.'s increasing bodily weakness; and particularly the difficulty he experienced in determining the meaning, as it related to him, of various texts presented to his mind at this time. The following extract from the memoirs shows his deep anxiety to understand God's word and providence:

"Dec. 6. For some months past, I have been tried, as it seems to me, on every point; yet, through the infinite mercy of God, I have not been left to fail utterly. The point on which I have felt the heat of this furnace most is the case of my poor wife. Her mind (blessed be His

name for ever,) is and has continued restored to peace ever since she was induced to compare her sin to that of Jonah's. She saw that the promise is free to her, and she rests on these words —'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest;' and also on these:—'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no-wise cast out.' But the cruel surmises and suspicions that are circulating, will break my heart. In the mean time, her health is fast sinking. From the weakness I feel, I am certain that if I were not held up by supernatural grace, my doleful anticipations would bring me quickly to the grave. I endeavoured to cry unto the Lord constantly, and in particular, if it might be his will, to spare her life to me and to the family. I obtained for an answer many scriptures, of which the following are some of the chief that exercised my mind. 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,' Rom. ix. 18. This I took at first to be a denial of my request, but on reflection I thought it was designed to assert God's sovereignty only, but did not forbid me to seek mercy for her soul. I continued my suit. Then these words were sent:—'My grace shall be sufficient for thee.' This seemed to promise to bear me up, whatever the event might be as to her; but did not appear to be a grant of my request;—and my distress became greater. Still, as I thought it not a positive denial, I continued my suit for her recovery to health. After this these words came with power: 'Be of good cheer, thy sins

are forgiven thee.' This was comforting as to myself. I did take comfort from it, but it did not seem to grant my request. Next came these words: 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' This was abundant comfort for myself, but rather implied a denial of my petition. My distress was keen, but I resolved to continue my suit until it should be put beyond all doubt what God's will was. Next came Christ's grant to the Syro-phenician woman: 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' This I thought was a grant, yet it did not come with such power as to make my mind rest upon it with confidence. I was afraid, lest my great desire might lead me to a wrong application of the words, and was also afraid lest it might be a threatening to give me what I sought with anger. But as the same words came after to my mind, I could not believe it was for nothing. It was God's own word, written for our learning, falling upon my mind, according to his holy will and providence: therefore I am warranted to learn from it, and apply it. I looked on it as his promise of health and soundness to her. Still I was depressed, and full of tossings: when I looked at her, I saw every ray of hope disappearing; and when I looked at this word, I thought she must either recover, or I was lost and confounded as to the meaning of scriptures in connexion with providence. Then I thought there is nothing too hard for the Lord; he can easily raise her from he grave's mouth, and then it will so much

the more be seen to be his hand. I felt myself guilty for doubting a moment that she would recover, although I saw no sign of it.

"Subsequently, on occasion of great sadness, while walking alone on the road, the words of the multitude to the blind man, and Christ's words to him, came to my mind: 'Be of good cheer, he calleth thee:' and—'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?'—on which I said before him who hears 'the secret groans of the heart,'—Lord, that my wife may recover to her family and to me, and be able to tell what thou hast done for her.

"In a short time I was relieved, and had hope; but fear and increasing perplexity soon returned when I saw death depicted in her countenance. Then came in my mind Christ's words to the ruler, after they told him his daughter was dead—*Fear not, only believe.* Still dissolution seemed evidently coming nearer. My thoughts at this time it is impossible to tell. The words of God endure for ever—these very words to which my attention and expectations have been drawn. If she do not recover, what must I conclude? That I have been totally mistaken as to its application and use? That I am under a delusion as to the meaning of the scripture and providence altogether? No, I cannot think this, yet I know not what I ought to think. While these awful thoughts were filling me to the brim, the words of Christ to Martha at the grave came with a temporary relief:—'Said I not unto thee, that if thou

shouldst only believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?' This I thought was an intimation, that a blessed and glorious *resurrection* was laid up for her as the health and recovery that should be the answer to all my prayers and tears. But I felt loath to let her go, and still clung to the thought of a mortal recovery and health.

"I was now much convinced that I might have a satisfying clearness as to the state of her soul before God, and while in prayer the words of the prophet came with a peculiar pointedness to the case:—She 'shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels.' I found, in conversation, she was looking to the promise —particularly to the words of Christ, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest'—and 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no-wise cast out.' I also saw that she was in great quietness, and sensible confidence after so great a *conflict*—so that I judged the Lord was now accomplishing to her the words of promise, which came more than a year ago—'The Lord shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace;' so that I conclude I have a comfortable answer as to her state. On one occasion I sat down and said within myself, my spirit is broken down. Before rising, these comforting words were brought to my mind: 'The Lord is near to them that are of a broken spirit.' My thought was, O that I may have a token of the truth—that the Lord is *nigh to me*. I was led for a

text, to these words of Isaiah:—'Call ye upon him while he is near,' from which I derived comfort. I was led to these words for a Psalm, at the close.

'God's near to all that call on him,
In truth that on him call.
He will accomplish the desire
Of those who him do fear;
He also will deliver them,
And he their cry will hear.'

"Again I began to hope for recovery. Do not these sweet words, I said, bid me hope that he will hear my cry? I thought I had erred in doubting a moment. I will hope against hope, and refuse to let the promise go. Early on the morning of the Sabbath on which she died, as I was walking by her bed-side alone, and as I looked on her spent frame, the word of God to Ezekiel fell on my mind: 'Son of man, *can these bones live?*' I answered with the prophet. But upon reflecting on them in their connexion, they seemed to let in at once a great degree of light, and to be the key to the meaning and application in this case of all those passages which had been impressed on my mind in regard to her; namely, that although the Lord would not restore her to life here, yet his words should not fail, but have their most perfect accomplishment in her when these *very bones* on which I was looking should again live, and she should have no more sickness or pain, and be fashioned like unto Christ. And I now remembered, that to this time must, when rightly understood, be

referred several of the texts, especially—'She shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels.' This was but a few hours before she departed.

"Dec. 15th. I endeavoured to bring my mind so far to approve and acquiesce in this sore breach, as to preach on Christ's words in the garden, next Sabbath, and to make them my own—'Not my will, but *thine* be done.' I can also adopt the words of the Psalmist—

'My soul within me breaks, and doth
Much fainting still endure;'

and

'My heart within me smitten is,
And it is withered
Like very grass; so that I do
Forget to eat my bread.'

In a letter dated December 24th, 1843, he says: "Now I am left in the midst of seven children, one of them a babe. I need as much as ever I did your prayers that I may be directed aright. I feel myself quite feeble and unwell. "It is at times very painful to think that some of the people still adhere to what I cannot but think their cruel misunderstanding of her case, and no way is left me of setting them straight. God only knows the anguish of spirit this has caused me through the summer.—And may he forgive them the wrong they have done to her and me.

"I think I have a desire to justify my God in all that he has done, and can agree with him that it is better she is taken than if I had

been taken and she left, considering her disabled condition. Farther, it seemed manifest there was but little comfort for her here, and if she is now with Christ, as I confidently believe, it is *far, far* better than the most comfortable condition on this side the grave, as she herself said two days before her death.

"As to myself, I know not at present how I shall get along.—Yet it were most wicked to doubt that *he* who has carried me through so much already, and who, I think, yea, am sure has never forsaken me, will not provide for me a way. It is his name,—"The Lord will provide." I desire to bless his name for enabling me still to preach, except the Sabbath on which she died, when I was not able, neither did propriety seem to require it."

From another, of April, 1834:.

"Although I wrote last, I write again, because I think the time long since I heard from you, and because you are now-a-days almost the only correspondent I have. Such is my weakness, that I must have somebody to talk to. Since I saw you I have several times been visited with depression of spirits, and my old nervous complaint,—so far as to fear that I would be rendered useless to the public by it. Sundry things continue to prey upon my spirit, till at times it is almost past bearing. There is scarcely a week passes without some of us being ailing. The congregation has not been visited through in a long time, and does not seem to be in a prosperous state. Public spirit,

and a praying spirit in particular, are very low; —and, what is as bad as any thing else, I feel myself placed in a dilemma either to let the solemn and deep impressions I received during the past year grow weaker and wear off, or, in order to renew them a little, sink back into insupportable grief. I have at times a great desire to write, but am scarcely able to endure the fatigue of it. I have written and sent another discourse of a *minister to himself*, and you will readily perceive, on comparing it with the first, a prostration of mental suffering in the second. A request has been sent from Virginia to explain the first nine verses of the 3d chapter of 2 Tim. And although I think I know the meaning of it, yet I am afraid I will bring forth but a feeble lecture on it. I struck last week in preaching upon another "Maxim of Bible religion," the immense importance of which kindled me a little; but O my feebleness. The fire is already nearly out; yet I cannot think to let it go. It is Deut. viii. 2: "Thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness."

CHAPTER XI.

"1834. My family affairs were attended with much difficulty through sickness and the infancy of the youngest, and other troubles, which rendered it, as I thought, necessary to

form a new connexion rather sooner than is customary. By the efforts of some who were opposed to my new connexion, Elizabeth Craig, a meeting of the congregation was called with a view to procure a vote for requesting Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation between them and me. In this they failed, but opposition continued. All this, after what had just passed over me before, seemed for that time to fill up the cup to the brim. So powerful was the impression, that I have not, to this day, (about nine years after) recovered from it. Still I could see mercy mingled with judgment. I was through all of it enabled to preach. Also, Providence seemed to give me countenance. The 10th of Matthew, verse 14th, came in the regular course of lecture the next Sabbath after the above meeting—'And whosoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house, or city, &c.'

It may not be improper to mention here that Mr. Gordon's third marriage, principally owing to the disparity of years between them, was not generally approved of among his friends;—and his enemies took advantage of it to speak reproachfully of him. In extenuation of his imprudence, if it deserve so harsh a word, his eminently social disposition may be adduced, his being left so exceedingly destitute and so far separated from any of his brethren in the ministry. I may also add, that he experienced more comfort in this marriage than was expected, Mrs. G. giving evidence of being

a serious godly woman. A few extracts of letters written immediately before and after this marriage will show his condition and state of mind at this time.

In answer to a letter he had received on the subject of his marriage, he says, "So far as a good conscience will accompany, and I am able to bear, your advice will be taken.

Indeed, if I get not better, it would be improper to talk of marrying at all; I ought rather to think of the eternal world." From one dated,

"June 6th, 1834.

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

This day I received yours of the 2d inst. Perhaps I should have written you before this time. I am sure it was no feeling of anger or displeasure of any kind that hindered me. Your preceding letter did not affect me in that way at all. And now that I have begun to write, I scarcely know what to say to you or any other of my correspondents; my energy of mind is so exhausted, my spirits so low, and my body so weak. You advise me not to think too much. Now it is precisely in that very thing that my disease spends its force, and is likely to carry me I know not where. I have with difficulty continued preaching, though after I have begun awhile, I get along comfortably till the interval. I have been trying to write for the Monitor, but continue only a short time till my head seems turning round, and then I must quit. I cannot help being nearly absorbed in my own matters, that are

past, present, and to come. These I want words to describe, and nerves to bear a sight of the description, if I were able to give it, and, after all, what end would it serve to write about these things? Yet on other things my communications would be meagre and uninteresting. This brings me to the conclusion to lay down my pen again, after I had taken it up. I think perhaps I will get into a better state, and write then. By this means it has come to pass I have not written to several who may impute it to another cause.

My sore loss, which can never be fully repaired in this world, accompanied as it is with peculiar and complex circumstances, will, for aught I know, continue to prey on my heart so long as it beats.

In this present matter, I thought I was going in the way the Lord led; nor am I able (all things considered which have presented themselves to my view, I may be in error) to see differently yet; nor, if I did, could I well turn now; and yet it is not generally approved. This sometimes forces on my view conclusions that are terrible, and thoughts I dare not look at a moment. 'O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave!' No, such a thought often, indeed, seeks vent; but rather, 'O let my footsteps in thy word aright still ordered be!' So that if I am in error in this matter, thy grace may, in this time of need, help me to prevent or escape its evil consequences. I would fain have my

friends' countenance and approbation; but I know it cannot be unless they stood in my circumstances, which I pray may not fall to the lot of my enemies, much less of my friends.

It may be, that now, after some degree of good esteem enjoyed from those I love, I am about to be tried with its contrary, and be awhile despised. Well, be it so: I am only a sinful worm, and my iniquities, like the wind, carries me away. But it can only be awhile, and perhaps only a little while, when my days, and with them my afflictions, will be numbered." Remember me to Mrs ——, and I desire an interest in your prayers. A. GORDON.

Putnam, September 17th, 1834.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I am still unable to decide as to going to Synod. There is a duty in going, and a duty in staying, and I cannot see which preponderates. My health is not better, so far as I know. The Doctor may palliate my symptoms, but he cannot reach the cause of my ill health, a broken heart and low spirits. I thought, when we parted, I would try and tell it to you; but I feel that I cannot: my *heart* only knows its own bitterness. The hand of God has not only touched me, but lies heavy on me. My natural courage is gone, I am at times sorely tried with sundry temptations; for example, What if I never understood the ways of Providence, nor the right application of Scripture to particular cases? Am I qualified to have the charge of a congregation?

But I am not always alike, sometimes feeling comfort for a day or two. Then I have a great deal of outward trouble. I bear it as silently as I can, but my heart sinks under it. It also grieves me that the step I have taken should be so adverse to the views of my friends; for I am none of those who say *they don't care.* It gives me much sorrow. We can both say, that, had we known before truth was pledged, that it would have been so viewed, we would have sacrificed any opinion or predilection we had. I very much desired to have you here, but was afraid to ask, lest it might be disagreeable, and surely I felt bound to respect those feelings which treated me with so much tender delicacy in my weakness. But enough, I am sometimes trying to believe that while last summer's trials were designed on God's part to show me the power of his own grace in me, and this summer again by these trials just mentioned how weak I am in myself, notwithstanding that grace; borne along from time to time, just on the very point of fainting. On the other hand, I think Satan, last summer, tried to lift me up with spiritual pride; for every one that spoke or wrote compared my case to Job's, and expressed their wonder 'how I stood it,' 'how I could preach,' &c. This summer I think he tries just the reverse, to drive me to despair, and make me think I have been deluded all along, as every body's disapprobation is expressed more or less at the step I have taken, sincerely believing I was going according to

the voice of God's providence and word. I know not where all these temptations will end, nor what the Most High may have in reserve for me; but I try to believe he will not suffer me to be tempted above what he will enable me to bear. Surely, if an unseen, unfelt hand were not holding me, there are moments when I would fall headlong into destruction. Often the saddest expressions of soul-trouble that are to be found in the Psalms fit my case and feelings just as if they had been made for *me alone*. It may be the Lord is bringing me down into these various attitudes of trouble, that I may see into the force and meaning of these passages. It strikes me forcibly that the Psalms have invariably travelled with me through all my great troubles, and spoke to me when none else could come within speech of my case. This, indeed, lays me under eternal obligation to praise his amazing wisdom, love and condescension. But what a miserable improvement have I made of it! How soon forgot it! How quickly do I harden, grow senseless and stupid to spiritual matters! I am like a lamp whose oil is nearly done, that needs stirring up every minute, otherwise it would go out. I am constantly needing some stirring work of the Spirit—some sore correction, enough to break all my bones. But surely there will be a last one, and it will do its work upon me perfectly—then my weary soul will escape out of all adversity, and be at rest.

My dear brother, I entreat you to bear with

me, for I have no other with whom I can be so free and plain. The Lord will reward you for your sympathy.

Your afflicted, sorrowful brother,

A. GORDON.

"I have looked upon it as no small trial, that I have had to contend for a long time with some brethren in the Presbytery who ought to have been fathers to the rest of us. In addition to much travel, expense and vexation, we have been and still are reproached and vilified on every hand. What I would most approve is sometimes not easy to perform—namely, to bear it patiently, without relaxing a dutiful frame towards offenders. It is truly a melancholy sight to see a disposition evinced every where, to trample church government in the dust. What the end of these things will be God only knows; but we are called to humiliation.

"May, 1838. The Synod met at Philadelphia, and decided finally on the matters referred to. At the same time, my wife was so unwell I had great difficulty in leaving.

"While her complaint continued to resist all means used for her recovery, she manifested much patience, and expressed a strong hope of being safe through Christ's righteousness imputed to her.

"May 10th, 1839. After severe suffering of two weeks, she fell asleep. Bereavements and changes are measured out to me. But

they must appear to be necessary in the view of Infinite Wisdom. There is a 'need be' for them in my case. Happy, notwithstanding of these sore troubles, will it be for me if in the end they shall accomplish the destruction of sin, and ripeness for a better world, which I hope may be their issue.

"All these things have so increased my nervous debility, confusion of idea, and loss of memory, that I often fear being obliged to desist from preaching. While this causes me many moments of fearful anxiety and inexplicable sensations of weakness and fear, it is often God's occasion of helping me through (though not sensible of it at the moment) in a manner truly astonishing on the retrospect. It seems as if I might almost say in the apostle's words, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' But I would much desire to enjoy a sense of it at the time.

"1841. During the remaining part of 1839–40 my health declined. Besides the trouble in my head, I was much reduced by bowel complaint, followed by great depression of spirits. No word comes with the refreshing power it once did. Excessive wandering of thought in all duties, and the more spiritual the worse. I get through my public discourses, as it seems to me, mechanically. I know not what condition of soul I am in, only it is extremely uncomfortable to me, and unprofitable to the church. For I know my exercises are often meagre. I have, on account of my head, been

obliged to desist from writing, and almost from study. Although a diseased and broken constitution may be the occasion of all this, yet I have no doubt remaining depravity is at the bottom. And I believe our necessary concern in these long-continued difficulties in Presbytery has in a great measure contributed to this loathsome deadness of spirit; for the new creature is not made to thrive without the means of brotherly love and godly conversation. Still mercy mingles with judgment. I am still kept preaching the gospel, and I have still a desire towards it above all things. If God were to withdraw his hand, these would not be. And I hope also to be removed from this deadness before I die."

I may here observe that the deadness of spirit of which Mr. Gordon complains was not observed by any but himself. He was indefatigable in his pastoral duties: besides his ordinary labours, he at this time held meetings in his own house to impart spiritual instruction to such young persons and others as wished it. His public discourses, too, as I have learned from a member of his congregation who heard him statedly, were any thing but meagre.

CHAPTER XII.

"Some of my session," he says, "and several brethren, advised another marriage. After much reflection, and seeking of Divine

direction, I came to the conclusion that it was most probably the means to prolong my usefulness. And the leadings of divine Providence ought to be particularly observed and remembered in this matter by me, as affording striking proof of answer to prayer and his condescension.

"I was united in marriage to Miss Sarah M'Quarrie on May 4th, 1841. I may with truth say of this event—'A prudent wife is from the Lord.' I know of no woman living that could be a more suitable or desirable helpmeet for me.

"My son John married a member of the congregation, for aught I know of decent deportment. Now I began to look for a time of quiet and comfort, and why should I not? I had been for a number of years much tried, but now Providence seemed to smile upon me; and it is more suitable to expect good at the hand of the Lord than evil. We had indeed begun to feel comfortable, and to indulge in anticipations. But as the sun breaks forth after a shower, and is again suddenly hidden under the cloud, and the heavens are black with the foreboding of tempests, so it was with me. New mercies seem but a preparation for new trials in succession, through life, as also trials prepare for new mercies, and all of them for—'that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' that is designed by our gracious Lord for them that love him. May this be the happy issue of mine. I will neither murmur at their number nor severity.

"It was not more than two weeks till our new connexion betrayed symptoms of unlawful affection for another, and finally left her husband and refused to return. A grievous affliction to us all, surely—without any addition to it—but her immediate friends, who at first seemed to share with us in sentiment and feeling, turned, and tried to cover her shame by blaming her injured husband. Their attempt to do this, made it necessary to put the matter in the church session to undergo judicial investigation. This done, it became my duty to decline acting, and to request that it be referred to Presbytery. Notwithstanding the delicacy of the case, Presbytery laid it on us to take the testimony and transmit it to them. This they did before the congregation, after suitable reasons given for the necessity of the appointment. This unpleasant duty we endeavoured to perform with the utmost impartiality; yet at this, about one-third of the congregation took a stand in opposition to me. Providence interposed delays to the final issuing of the case once and again, as if calling them to sober reflection; namely, from the end of October to August following. My preaching, in the mean time, was exceedingly painful to my feelings. I endeavoured, in much weakness I acknowledge, to make the peace subserve with truth. Presbytery met at Putnam in July, to issue the case, and at my request to try and restore cordiality and good feeling; but in vain. So, after earnest desire for direction, and much

serious deliberation, and perceiving that there was no probability of general edification, I was constrained, much to the sorrow of myself and my many friends, to apply for dismission. This was granted at Hebron, August 3d, 1842.

"It is sometimes hard to tell which is the severest trial of a man's life, but this is no light one to me. After spending the best fifteen years of my life and strength in preaching and writing among them, after the children had grown up around me to manhood, to be thus driven away as unprofitable and unsuccessful, causes pungent grief; and if I did not know that many of Christ's servants, and Christ himself received no better treatment, it would overwhelm me. How painful to think of the children and youth there without a guide!

"How frivolous soever their objections were to me, I know that my Lord and Master could bring forward enough against me; therefore will I humble myself before him. I am in his hand, also my poor services, to do with them and me as he pleases. It is some comfort that the fairest inquiry brought forth nothing reproachful against either my son or myself. We may stand erect before men;—but oh how becoming it is to lie in the dust before Him who knows our hearts and thoughts. It is also a mercy to be observed, that Providence has provided another place not above my strength, and a kind people at Johnstown."

In the important matter to him of leaving Putnam and removing to Johnstown, he was

careful to do nothing rashly, but anxious to follow the leadings of Providence. He seems to have been, like good old Thomas Scott, very much afraid of "carving out his own lot."

In a letter dated Dec. 1841, he says, "Now a word or two in answer to your letter. At present I would judge with you, that Providence is pointing my way to Johnstown, so far at least as to make a trial of it. I told S——, some time ago, when speaking about a place to go to, to let Providence alone for that; for he would provide a place. And I cannot but look on the circumstance to which you refer as very remarkable—as also this, to-day, when I had begun to write to you, among other things, that I could on no account think of remaining here, that your letter with the account of Johnstown movement should come to hand, yet I am disposed not to conclude hastily respecting it. It may have been only the mind of one or two there."

From another letter, dated March 11th, 1842. "Although I see no prospect of being comfortable and useful here, yet I feel extremely anxious to have the entire concurrence of Presbytery, with all the circumstances of the case under their eye in my dismission.

"I received a letter from Johnstown, requesting me to supply some weeks—to which I have replied in substance, that I feel very averse to do any thing at my own hand in present circumstances; but that if the issue of

Presbytery's investigation should be my removal, and if they still desired my services, I would be willing to supply them some time.

"You mention that a call has been suggested by some of the brethren, and ask what do I say to this? I answer, I know not what to say. It is still possible that Presbytery, after they have heard the whole matter, and considered all its bearings, might hesitate to loose me, and if they should hesitate, it would certainly make me hesitate. The people of J—— might not be as well suited after hearing awhile as they think *now* they would be. All things considered, it may be best to say little, resolving to yield myself to the concurring indications of the mind of Providence, when the time arrives for action. If I know my own heart, I do most sincerely wish to do nothing in the premises that would cause regret in a dying hour."

In the month of August of this year (1842) Mr. Gordon tendered to the Presbytery the resignation of his charge of the congregation of Putnam; which after due process in the case was accepted, and the pastoral relation between him and the congregation dissolved. And in October or November following, he removed with his family to Johnstown.

His journal proceeds:—

"March 5th, 1843. This day being troubled with my head, I endeavoured to plead the Master's promise to his own work, 'My grace shall be sufficient for thee,' &c. I was the

more desirous of particular assistance, as my text was that sweet passage, Hosea ii. 19, 20: 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever,' &c. That I might be enabled to make a free and pressing offer of Christ to sinners: and surely I received a gracious answer. There were a great many strangers present, who appeared attentive. What a happiness it would be, if they accepted Christ on the terms there set down. I preached on the passage, on a communion day, nearly eleven years ago, under peculiar trials, but with great freedom and comfort; and did solemnly consent myself to be Christ's, and sealed the contract by receiving the symbols of his body and blood; and I here enter my record before God that I stand to it still, that Christ, as there set forth, is my only hope, for trials, for duties, for life, death and eternity; and that I give to him my soul and body, my time, strength, influence, and all for ever and ever— A. GORDON.

"April 2d, Sabbath.—Yesterday, being drawn to think and talk about the treatment I had received in P—— from some connected with me, my nerves became so affected that to-day I scarcely thought I could preach at all; my mind perfectly confused, unable to retain a clear idea for a moment; my knees so feeble as to be scarcely able to stand. But duty says I must go, in all this weakness. I go, trying to throw myself on his promise of grace and strength to do his own work; and if I fail and become a disgrace to the work, I try to say, If

it is to be so, *thy will be done.* The subjects are awfully important. The lecture, Daniel ix. 20—27, and the sermon, Luke xii. 18: 'And they all, with one consent, began to make excuse.' There were many strangers present.

"Now I have to record that I had great liberty in speaking and pressing to an acceptance of the free gift of God,—much greater than for a long time before. I will say it was the power of Christ, so that when I was weak, then was I strong. Lord, I know nothing, either what I *can* do, or what I cannot do,—when I am to be useful or useless. It may be, indeed, that when I came here with the wreck of a constitution, supposing that I would be of little more service, thou wert opening a door of greater usefulness than before. However it may be, O set home upon my soul with almighty power that precious word left to thy poor servants:—'My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in *weakness.*' Then shall I both do and suffer all thy will. I see from this experience how thou canst bring great good out of very painful evils.

"May 11th. To-day I sent away a letter containing my excuse for absence from the coming meeting of the Synod, as I have no money to bear my expenses. As this meeting is expected to be important,—probably the last before it be subdivided,—I would like to go; but I submit to Providence.

"When David returned from the post office,

he brought a letter from an old and tried friend, and when I opened it, lo, it enclosed $20 for the purpose of bearing my expenses to the Synod. Although it is but little I can do at Synod, yet surely the Lord designs I should go, and with his favour I will go.

"July 10th. Yesterday the Lord's supper was dispensed in this congregation. My plea was, 'If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.' And when I consider my weakness of body and nervous debility, I must surely record the freedom and comfort I had in preaching the sermon from Gal. iv. 4, 5, as a proof that He answered,—'My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.'

"But the mercy is mingled with judgment. I think that it is a great discouragement that not *one* of the youth of this congregation have come forward to make a profession. From a Bible-class of over twenty, well attended all winter, apparently interested in these instructions that pointed out the privilege and duty of it, and yet not *one*. Is my ministry to be blessed here?

"Oct. 29, 1843. For two days past I have been afflicted with diarrhœa, and to-day (being Sabbath,) it so continued that I knew not whether it was duty or not to venture on public exercises. After laying the matter before the Lord, I was led to leave it to be decided by the way the trouble should be just at the time of going to church. At that time it seemed so far abated that I went though

in much weakness. I took this ground before God: Thou art calling me to the work, there are difficulties and much bodily weakness in the way;—but I will go in the way of depending on that word given to thy servants: 'Lo, I am with you.' After I was in the pulpit I said, Lord, I have come, and now I leave the state of my body on thee, and will try to think only of thy promise.

"Now I have to record, that I experienced no trouble in the least till all the public exercises were over, and also that it seemed to me I had much more than common liberty in his work. Here is the faithfulness of his promise and the answer of prayer. What kindness and mercy of my Lord and Master to me a sinner! Hitherto hath the Lord helped. And he will help me unto the end, and in the end. My desire is to have a constant eye on his promise, and constant hand on his work. My lecture on this day was 2 Tim. iii. 7—10, chiefly Paul's doctrine, manner of his life and persecutions. Sermon 2 Thess. i. 7, 8: 'But to you who are are in trouble, rest with us, &c.'

"I have now been here a year, and have experienced much goodness in God's providence during that time. Upon a small sum of money we have got along without contracting debt.—Had plenty to eat and wear,—a comfortable habitation for winter. Our general health good, enjoying the friendship of the congregation. We also enjoy a prayer-meeting every week. I have also attained some

very refreshing views of truth,—particularly one on the life of *faith*, from Peter's walking on the water. When I consider all the circumstances of my coming here, in connexion, —the present condition of this Presbytery,— the scarcity of gospel preaching in this place— and the providential hinderance of a design to call me in another place,—I am led to conclude that the Lord calls me to remain here. Trials and difficulties I look for, but if my work be here, the Lord will be with me in it; and I will be carried through as I have been this day.

"Nov. 21st. This day the people here were moved by the Lord to bring in, of their own accord, a quantity of grain and other things for the use of the family. This is not only a mark of their good will, and that my ministry is not wholly unprofitable to them, but also that I should continue here for some time at least. How great is the goodness of the Lord, even in temporal things, to me! Here is new reason to be careful for nothing, but leave all to him. 'The Lord will provide.' I will endeavour, through his grace, to go on constantly in the great work; and when my work is done, my hope is to dwell by that Eternal Fountain whence all these streams of present comfort flow.

"Feb. 15th, 1844. This day we started for Argyle. I was much troubled with something like rheumatic pain in my stomach. In hope that a remission of labour would be helpful, I intended not to preach; but when Sabbath

came, as I awakened, the following words fell on my mind: 'The Lord is with thee.' When I came to the meeting-house, I was urged to preach, and durst not refuse. I felt great freedom, and believe the Lord *was* with me. I was asked to preach in the evening in a private house to a poor lame woman. Immediately these words came: 'Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them,—and them that suffer adversity, as being also in the body,' &c. Heb. xiii. 3. And had great liberty again, especially in speaking in behalf of the poor slave who is in the most cruel *bonds*.

"On Wednesday attended a catechising with much pleasure. In the evening lectured in the meeting-house with considerable freedom, showing how much it was the duty of ministers of the gospel to endeavour to have slavery abolished. On Thursday attended another catechising; the subject was the business of *faith* in the Christian life. Had great liberty. Arrived at home on Saturday the 24th, safe; and without much premeditation preached twice on Sabbath with freedom. Thus, I believe the truth of the words was made out to me on this occasion. I believe, also, that out of much weakness I was made strong for all this work. When we know that we are truly weak beyond any mistake, and are borne out in the midst of it to a free exercise in God's work, it is strong evidence that the Lord is with us, and this gives unspeakable consolation. When the

Lord calls to labour, and gives a promise with it, we need not fear to go, whatever be our weakness."

It was my privilege to attend all these exercises of Mr. Gordon in Argyle,—the last, indeed, I was ever to hear from him;—and can add my testimony that he was truly helped to speak a word in season to the weary. In particular, on Sabbath evening preaching to the lame woman, when the text was given out, but, though I knew he was a very decided abolitionist, I had no thought he would preach a sermon almost wholly on the subject; thinking it not appropriate for the occasion. I was therefore surprised to find him deliver a thorough anti-slavery discourse; but so edifying, consolatory, and very appropriate, that the most captious could not find fault. On the anti-slavery, as on every other subject, Mr. Gordon always maintained and advocated fearlessly what he thought was truth, without fear of consequences. It may not be improper to give in this place, some extracts of letters, relating chiefly to this subject. I may first mention, however, that previously to his visit to Argyle above alluded to, there was an anti-slavery meeting in Johnstown, which the Rev. Abel Brown, a Baptist minister, addressed. Some persons had stirred up those of *the baser sort* to make a riot—first making so much noise as to drown the speaker's voice;—stones were thrown, and a poor coloured man was much abused. To prevent bloodshed, Mr. Brown

intimated he would leave the meeting, as the house of Mr. Gordon would give him refuge. He and the coloured man ran all the way to Mr. Gordon's house, closely followed by the infuriated mob, who threw various missiles at them. After entering Mr. G.'s house, the mob continued yelling hideously before the door. All this time Mr. Gordon, notwithstanding his nervous excitability at other times, acted with the most perfect calmness, and though apparently in so imminent danger, showed no alarm whatever. Before the tumult had subsided, he commenced family worship, Mr. Brown requesting him to sing the 124th Psalm:

"Had not the Lord been on our side,
May Israel now say,
Had not the Lord been on our side
When men rose us to slay;
They had us swallowed quick, when as
Their wrath 'gainst us did flame;
Waters had covered us, our soul
Had sunk beneath the stream.
Then had the waters swelling high,
Over our soul made way.
Bless'd be the Lord, who to their teeth,
Us gave not for a prey.
Our soul's escaped as a bird,
Out of the fowler's snare;
The snare asunder broken is,
And we escaped are, &c."

"This was sung by all with a lively sense of gratitude to God, who had preserved them from the wrath of man. Mr. Brown then engaged most fervently in prayer for those who had so grievously and causelessly wronged him. The first letter written after this time which

I have been able to procure, though it does not refer to this meeting, yet is on the subject. It is dated,

Johnstown, Feb. 7th, 1844.

DEAR BROTHER:—

"As I have been for some time past pretty highly charged with abolition, it will be best to let it off first. An attempt was made to form a town liberty society, and, being asked, I consented to speak, and accordingly gave a public intimation. Some of our people were alarmed, and thought their little congregation was going to be ruined by it. However, I went on and gave my address. As I had the week before (on our fast day) handled without much ceremony the subject of a voter's obligation before God to vote for the man whom he sent up to act in God's place as a magistrate, I confined myself this time to the action which our church had taken in relation to slavery, and the justification of what they had done. I attended the convention at Gloversville two days, and being asked to speak, I did it: that was indeed bad enough. But this thing of *keeping niggers in the house!* is hardly to be endured—We have had three fugitives besides L. Washington. There are a number of gentle-hearted would-be-called abolitionists here; but the fugitives, it seems, are rather willing to try Mr. L—— and me, though we are both *little men.* I am doubtful our people will not be brought over very soon. However, I am plying them pretty freely in private as occasion offers with

tracts and arguments. What effect it will have on my staying here I do not know. I think some have on their long faces at me just now, but it may wear away; and, if not, I shall go on, leaving the issue with God, to assail that *sum of all villanies* at every point, as opportunity offers; and if it be his holy will, I shall as cheerfully go from Johnstown for sake of this matter, as I did from Putnam for another cause. After three times dispensing the Lord's supper I have to say—one young *person only* has been admitted, and I have sometimes great fits of discouragement, and think that I cannot accept their call. On the other hand, I am averse to move again,—and since M—— left his people, they attend. I think them a serious and pious people, and must say that I have had lately more liberty in lecturing (perhaps through their prayers) than for twenty years past. Give me only a *continuance of this liberty*, and let other things be what they may, I shall not leave here.

"I am glad to hear you are so much better. I have been often concerned about you this winter. My sympathy was no doubt quickened by a pretty sharp attack of rheumatism in my back, which made me a cripple for a time. I rejoice to hear of your large accession and the comfort of the occasion. I know that you will not flinch from the good cause. Pour forth hard arguments in soft words. I am solemnly convinced, that had the ministry and

the Christian church lifted a faithful voice respecting the awfully important moral duty of voting in men to act as God's deputies, and respecting slavery, there would not have been a slave in the states to-day. Now this infatuation on the northern mind which is the consequence of our sinful neglect, is a *rod* in the hand of Providence to whip us to our duty. I felt somewhat proud in my first address to show that our church had taken ground against it so early, yet not quite early enough. But let us go on.

"I am filled with admiration at C. M. Clay's speech at the Sulphur Springs. Through the blessing of God it will have *a great effect* on the higher grades of *independent* intellects.

Johnstown, March 11th, 1844.

DEAR BROTHER:—

"We got home in safety, and found all well on Saturday afternoon. By the time I extemporized the sabbath discourses, I was pretty flat, nervous and bilious, with sore eyes. I do not know the homœopathic name of these things, but wish I had some of your medicine for them.

"Our town election is now over. The liberty ticket got fifty-one votes, which is nearly treble what it was last fall. Our increase is due, in a good degree, to the reaction of our mob. An arrangement is to be made for me to speak at Gloversville. I am to take substantially the same subject which I had at Argyle. I have found it is a vulnerable point

with many—our fifty-one votes have forced many to think who would not think before; they begin to understand it will be no children's play very soon, and there seem some small clouds gathering over the fall prospect already; but let us talk soberly to man, and pray fervently to God, and wait the issue in hope. I cannot look on this subject without feeling intense interest. As the time for divine judgments comes nearer (for come they must) the men into whose hands the affairs of the nation are intrusted seem to be more infatuated. This remark is based on the manœuvre by which the decision on the 21st rule was again got up and laid on the table, and the disaster aboard the steamship carrying away the two secretaries who were in favour of the annexation of Texas, and on the *same day*.

"If the North (I say not the South) will not be brought to reason in time to prevent God's taking the work in his own hand, it may be a terrible work in righteousness to us all. It is by such considerations I wish to be influenced myself, and to influence others to act in the premises. And here I find myself in my appropriate sphere."

In one of his letters, after lamenting the evils of party spirit, the spirit of distrust and suspicion with which those who were influenced by it—often listened to ministerial instruction, he says, "*So it has come to this:* if I handle the national sin of slavery, the Whigs are offended; if I handle popery, or do not pray aright for

the government since P—— was elected, or pray (I do not mean by name) for Torrey, Walker, &c., the democrats are offended; if I attempt to set forth the scriptural qualifications of rulers, and the moral obligation for them, both these parties are offended."

On another question which has somewhat excited the religious community, in a letter of a much earlier date, he thus writes: "I have lately read a publication of E. C. Delevan on the wine question, which, on the whole, gave me much pleasure. Although I began with a good deal of opposition in my mind, yet as I advanced it melted away,—misunderstanding was removed—want of information supplied, —and I came away clearly in favour of using, if it can be got, the pure juice of the grape in the sacrament of the supper."

From the memoirs under date of April 14th, 1844, he says,—"Having lost a great part of my sleep, I was to-day in an unfit state to preach, and having a great fear I would be confused, I was led to plead particularly, that neither this body, nor the flesh, nor fear of man, nor Satan, might be permitted to hinder my preaching nor believing. Though frequently sensible of much confusion, especially in view of the afternoon, yet I was carried through in such a way as cannot be accounted for without divine assistance. The forenoon was Heb. ii. 1—4, where I had great freedom in pressing to a present acceptance of the great salvation. In the afternoon I had equal liberty

in urging to imitate God and Christ—from Eph. v. 1, 2. I desire my own soul may be enabled most heartily to close in with the doctrine I have preached to others. But here comes the hottest of the battle with Satan and sin, for I find by frequent experience that the opposition of these two foes is not near so great to *preaching* as to *personal application*.

"Coldness, vain wandering thoughts, doubts and fears, set themselves against this in battle array. But if I am, in view of death and judgment, relying on any *thing at all*—I am sure it is on this *great salvation*. And I do agree that all the flesh in me be utterly destroyed, in whatever way it may please the Holy Spirit to accomplish it.

CHAPTER XIII.

"May 2d, 1844. This day I accepted from the hands of the Presbytery, met in Albany, the call from the congregation of Johnstown with the views expressed as follows:

"Although persuaded of the acceptance of my labours and of their hearty willingness to contribute to my support, yet not with any reasonable foresight of being supported nor of expectation of raising a congregation upon the peculiar principles of the Secession able to do it. But perceiving that Providence *has* supported me for some time there without making any debt, and that there appears to be but little

of the gospel preached in the village, and taking into consideration the present state of this Presbytery, and that my increasing infirmities disqualify me for a weighty charge, were any to offer, I consider it my duty to accept. This I have done after frequently seeking special direction at the throne of grace, that I might know what was duty against this meeting. I have thence concluded that it was the will of the Great Head of the Church.

"May 5th. This Sabbath morning, being out of order for speaking, endeavoured again to place myself and day's work explicitly on his promise of 'grace sufficient'—that I might have an experimental evidence of his faithfulness, and also be enabled for myself to take home the message. And surely I was enlarged beyond the ordinary degree, at least to my own apprehension—in prayer and in making close application of Christ to sinners.

"But I have still to deplore the multitude of vain wandering thoughts, and how hard it is to keep my mind to the subject,—and still also the fear of man, or perhaps as I may call it, *pride*.

"What a blessing it would be if the Lord would be pleased to give so strong a sense of his gracious presence as that I would think of none else.

"I have to record with thankfulness that now, for a considerable time, I have been relieved in my head.

"June 20th. This day, and for some time past, I have been in a strange disagreeable

state of mind with respect to my taking the congregation;—scarcely any signs of usefulness appearing,—could almost wish that the relation would not be formed between us. Under these impressions I endeavoured to show from Isa. xliii. 21, 'This people have I formed for myself, that they may show forth my praise,' what ought to be their chief end in maintaining a separate communion.

"I endeavoured to pray that the vows that I this day aimed to express with my lips, might be also the sincere purpose of my heart.

"And *now I have* vowed to be a pastor to this people, I do not know that I had any reserve on my mind,—and they seemed cordial in giving me the right hand of fellowship. There has appeared some evidence that my preaching is not altogether in vain.

"June 23, 1844. This day the holy ordinance of the Lord's supper was dispensed. My text was Psalm xl. 7, 8: 'Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart.' On these words I had a very delightful day more than twenty years ago in Guinston, and again they were sweet to-day—'The word of the Lord is pure,' like silver tried in the furnace seven times. It does not gather rust through time; it cannot gain any thing, it is perfect, and will endure for ever. I had a measure of freedom that told that God is the answerer of prayer. I

enjoyed much more at his table too than for a long time. The bands were in a measure taken off, and the *heart* had free egress to the Lord in asking for myself, each of the family, the congregation, the young in it, the Lord's people in the place, the Secession body, &c. In the deed I heartily agreed to receive the Lord as my all, and also to be at his service to the end. Amen.

"June 30th. Under a very disagreeable state of body I entreated that God would give me the truth of his promise by fitting my *body* as well as my soul for preaching the love of Christ in the lecture, Heb. v. 1—9, and our love and gratitude, 1 Pet. ii. 9, and I did not entreat in vain, even the body *was* helped. He has also let me see that my discouragements for want of success were not altogether well founded;—I trust a heaven-born soul was received into fellowship this day.

"August 4th. This day my text was Heb. xiii. 6, 7: 'For he hath said, I will never leave you nor forsake you,' &c. I pleaded before him whose promise this was, and whose work I was to be employed in, that I might have a clear evidence of its truth in my own experience through the day; and I did find that just in proportion as I could lean upon this word, other thoughts were excluded, difficulties and fears vanished, and my work went on with freedom and delight.

"Now I begin to see that the design of all this straitness and difficulty, arising these many

years from nervous weakness, was to draw me off from seeking to depend immediately on a sensible readiness on myself, and to place it immediately on the promise itself. My error has been in pressing in my prayers for the first instead of the last. I perceived that if the mind can but rest itself immediately on the promise in view of the work, all difficulty will vanish. I saw a young believer come in just before I began in the afternoon, for whom I begged that this promise might be brought home with refreshing power.

"August 11th. This day my text was Rev. xii. 11: 'And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb,' &c. This I had made choice of the preceding Sabbath eve. On Monday I got Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland from the earliest times to 1843, which shows one continued struggle for the alone headship of Christ against the deceit and violence of popes, kings, queens, cardinals, bishops, false-hearted Presbyterians, and Erastian despotic judges. But the friends of the truth have overcome them, and by the same means mentioned in the text, namely, suffering and witnessing; and the coincidence in the time in being led to read this book and study this text is a kindness in Providence worthy of record.

"January 23. Some things indicate a change to be approaching in our situation—offence taken at some things in my ministry from which I cannot recede. The young do

not appear to profit, or incline to espouse the cause.

"July 22d. Although there appears no more signs of remaining permanently here, nor of usefulness, yet the care and kindness of Providence ought to be recorded—By one means or other the family is supported without incurring any debt, more easily, than at any other time before. This providence teaches us to—'Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself'—'Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.'

"What reason does he give us every day to trust him with every concern, and follow a sense of duty to him. We are, indeed, to use means when we can, but so long as a clear sense of duty remains we are to trust him beyond means. I thought it impracticable to get along with $300 before I came here. A sense of duty obliged me first to come, and then to stay, and the Lord hath shown me that he can carry me along with less than $200 salary. May I not learn from this that it is best and safest to follow a sense of duty to him, and trust him with all the rest? And O that I may be enabled fully to do this at the end, which is fast coming near."

This was the last entry but one in our friend's journal,—and both this and the last contain a petition for a right and proper frame in death! As the time drew near when he was to take his journey heaven-ward, his thoughts were,

as it seemed, unconsciously to himself, turned more and more in that direction, and his prayers more fervent to be prepared for his departure. His last entry was July 27th, less than one month before his "*last moments.*"

"This day being greatly oppressed with bodily weakness, and not knowing how to stand through the exercises, I endeavoured earnestly to place myself on the promise. And O how certainly I was answered and held up by the Divine arm, and carried through with the greatest gentleness and ease—so that the people seem hardly willing to believe that I am so feeble as I certainly know myself to be. My hope is, that I shall be thus held up in my last moments to give my last testimony to the truth."

Here ends the autobiography of Alexander Gordon.

His trust was not in vain,—he *was* sustained in that trying hour. On Sabbath, the 17th of August, he preached two discourses with at least his usual ability and energy. In the evening, his sister being on a visit to his house at the time, he conversed with her and the family on religious topics, in his usually interesting and edifying manner. That night he slept more soundly than he usually did on Sabbath nights. On Monday morning he was awakened early by a distress in his stomach and bowels, which however did not alarm himself or family, as he had had frequent attacks of that kind formerly. He said, however, soon after

the commencement of the attack—"I know not what will be the end of this, but I never felt as I now do in any former sickness." Before ten o'clock the worst symptoms of the cholera morbus were developed. He was soon afterwards seized with spasms in his extremities, when he consented to have a physician called. Before the physician arrived, however, which was in a few minutes, he was already speechless. But although he declined rapidly from the first, yet he afterwards became able to speak. He said repeatedly to his friends,—"I am dying in the faith of the gospel I have preached to you." Thus most emphatically giving his last testimony to the truth, as he had wished to do. The violence of his disease greatly prostrated his mental energy, so much so that his family, from tenderness to him, refrained asking his advice as to the management of their worldly concerns. On Wednesday, he said, "What will be done?" Mrs. Gordon, supposing him to be anxious about what his family should do, asked if he wished to give them any directions. "O no," said he, "I will leave all that till Mr. M—— comes" (a friend for whom he sent.) "I mean what will be done about emancipation." Thus while the taper of life was flickering in its socket, he expressed his concern for the poor and needy,—and surely the promise was made good in his experience.

"Blessed is he that wisely doth, the poor man's case consider,
For when the time of trouble is, the Lord will him deliver."

He was blessed on earth while he lived, was not given up to the desires of his enemies—and when he came to Death, that last enemy that shall be destroyed, he was upheld by the rod and staff of the good Shepherd, so that he feared no ill. Gently, and apparently without pain, he yielded up his spirit to God who gave it, about half-past one o'clock on Wednesday, the 20th of August. Truly "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

Mr. G.'s mortal remains were interred in a burial ground in Johnstown, where his family still remain.

His character and disposition may be learned from the foregoing memoir. The varied and severe trials with which he was visited in the course of his life, though they had not repressed his actual cheerfulness, yet had, perhaps, the tendency to make him appear more habitually serious than professors of religion usually are. He had nothing of ascetic sourness about him, and most fully and wholly trusted to Christ *alone* for justification from sin—yet he was much more anxious than the generality of Christians now-a-days to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. In his own dress, and in that of his family, he wished the greatest plainness to be observed; saying—in view of the trials which they and the church met with,—"It would become us all to wear only sackcloth and ashes." He was strictly temperate in his appetites, and seeing the pernicious effects of drinking spirituous liquors of

any kind, he thought it incumbent on him to set the example of wholly abstaining from the use of them, and could scarcely be prevailed upon to take the small quantity of brandy recommended by his physician in his last illness.

Besides the other qualifications of a bishop which he possessed, he was *given to hospitality*. No one ever met his friends at his door with a more hearty welcome than he,—the face of a friend always brightening his countenance. To the poor and the stranger, too, his house was often a refuge.

Those acquainted with Mr. Gordon, and those who have read this memoir, will have observed how implicitly he trusted that God would provide all things necessary for him. A favourite passage of scripture with him was, "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing with prayer and supplication make known your requests to God." At one time previous to the burning of his house he was several hundred dollars in debt, yet Providence so favoured him in his temporal concerns by influencing liberal hearts to befriend him, and by other means, that though he received so small a salary, yet when he died, *he owed no man any thing*,—and left a comfortable house for his family. How faithfully was the promise made good in his experience: "There is no want to them that fear him"—"They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

He had no children by the last two marriages; and those by the former, five sons and

two daughters, are mostly so far grown up, as, with the habits of industry and frugality which they have been taught, to be able, in some measure, to maintain themselves. Besides, which, they have an interest in the inheritance which a good man leaves to his children; Prov. xiii. 2: "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children; and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just." The experience of the Psalmist enabled him to say, and God is not less careful of the children of his saints now, than then,

"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed." Psalm xxxvii. 25.

THE END.